

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN ORGANIZATION: DOES IT BRING SUCCESS?

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance is a critical factor in the hospitality industry, where service quality and operational efficiency strongly depend on employee behavior. However, various organizational and psychological factors may influence employee performance, including locus of control, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), rewards, and work stress. This study aims to examine the influence of locus control, organizational citizenship behavior, and rewards on employee performance, with work stress acting as a mediating variable. Data was collected from 187 employees who had worked for at least two years, ranging from staff to managerial level, in one hotel in Tangerang and two hotels in Yogyakarta. The data were analyzed using path analysis to evaluate the direct and indirect relationships among variables. The results show that rewards have a significant positive effect on employee performance when mediated by work stress. Organizational citizenship behavior does not have a direct significant effect on employee performance; however, it shows a significant indirect effect through work stress. These findings indicate that employees' voluntary work behaviors may influence performance when psychological pressure at work is considered. Furthermore, work stress has a significant negative effect on employee performance, indicating that higher stress levels can reduce employee effectiveness. This study contributes to the organizational behavior literature in the hospitality sector by highlighting the mediating role of work stress in explaining how organizational and psychological factors influence employee performance. The findings also provide practical implications for hotel management in designing reward systems and managing employee stress to improve performance.

Keywords: Locus of Control; Reward; Work Stress; Organizational Citizenship Behavior; Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, employee performance is still a benchmark for every organization, especially in Indonesia. Employee performance is the achievement corresponding to an organization's objects and carried out by every employee (Carvalho et al., 2020; Maley et al., 2021). To enhance maximum employee performance, there is a factor of environmental uncertainty situation during COVID-19 which has caused great effect and pressure on the tourism sector in Indonesia. According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2020), the impact of environmental uncertainty during COVID-19 on the tourism industry has been very pronounced in the large decline in the number of foreign tourist arrivals throughout the world with continuous cancellations and declining bookings in almost all tourism sectors. According to the data used for the object of this research, the level of discipline of hotel employees between 2019 and 2022 fluctuates between 57 percent and 67 percent. Hotel employees' ability to resolve problems between 2019 and 2022 fluctuates between 44 percent and 66 percent. Meanwhile, the responsibility of hotel employees between 2019 and 2022 fluctuates between 46 percent and 70 percent. The data of the research objective explains that the employee performance of hotel employees is not optimal, as can be seen that the maximum discipline of hotel employees is only 67 percent, the ability to solve problems at a maximum of only 66 percent, and the responsibility of hotel employees only 70 percent.

Considering the limited time and access to obtain data, this research is limited to two cities: Tangerang and Yogyakarta in the sector of hotel business in terms of employee performance for its employees. According to the data sources provided by Dinas Ketenagakerjaan Pemerintah Kota Tangerang (2022), the Tangerang City Government attempted to improve employee performance for its residents through the Department of Manpower—*Dinas Ketenagakerjaan (Disnaker)* which has the *Tangerang Cakap Kerja* (Tangerang for Work Skills) program. This program is a training program with various field options starting from packaging, digital marketing, to baristas. It was conducted by the government so that the employee performance of the city workforce expectantly could be maximized. In addition, according to the sources provided, the Yogyakarta City Government (*PEMKOT*) through the Social Department for Manpower and Transmigration (*Dinsosnakertrans*) in Yogyakarta also provides free skills training to prepare prospective workers who are ready to work with skills according to the competencies needed in the Business and Industrial World (DUDI). Considering the employment conditions in both cities, Tangerang and Yogyakarta, there are differences in geography, demographics, culture. However, there are several similarities that can also be found in employee performance in both cities:

1. Tourism Industry: Both Tangerang and Yogyakarta have thriving tourism industries.
2. Manufacturing Industry: Tangerang is known as the center of the manufacturing industry in Indonesia, while Yogyakarta also has several significant manufacturing companies.
3. Technology Skills: Both Tangerang and Yogyakarta are experiencing growth in the technology and digital sectors.
4. Work Culture: Despite having unique local cultural differences, both Tangerang and Yogyakarta can have a work culture that encourages collaboration, innovation, and high performance. Employees in both locations may value inclusive work environments, support from coworkers and management, and opportunities for career development.
5. Education and Training: Both Tangerang and Yogyakarta have access to quality education and training institutions.

In facing increasingly competitive business competition, the hotel industry is required to always innovate and maximize all existing opportunities (Abdullah, 2020). The result of the research obtained by Abdullah (2020) shows that high employee work stress will increase employee performance if it is mediated by good work motivation, for this reason hotel employees must be tough and have good performance so that the number of tourist visits to the hotel can be maximized. Based on these data, this research attempts to find information about whether employee performance is affected by locus of control, organizational citizenship behavior, rewards, and work stress.

Locus of control has the view that each individual shows bargaining attitude, interaction with each other, and attempt to influence each other (Buccioli & Trucchi, 2021). Organizational citizenship behavior is usually shown by every individual to achieve organizational goals (Wibowo et al., 2023). Rewards are something given by an organization in the form of tangible or intangible goods to employees as an award or honor for the employees succeeded in achieving the performance standards set by the organization. Therefore, the correlation between performance-based rewards and innovative behavior in conditions of good employee performance and low uncertainty. Work stress is pressure and intimidation from co-workers resulting in feelings of being belittled and victimized/oppressed at work, unclear roles/tasks, afraid of unemployment, traumatic at work, and poor concentration (Wibowo et al., 2024). (Palumbo et al., 2023) explain that employee involvement can exacerbate psychosocial stress in the workplace.

The concept of locus of control plays a crucial role in understanding employee behavior within organizations. Individuals with an internal locus of control tend to believe that their actions significantly influence outcomes, leading to proactive behaviors such as bargaining, interaction, and efforts to shape their environment (Buccioli & Trucchi, 2021). This internal belief system can foster a sense of agency, motivating employees to engage in behaviors that benefit organizational objectives. Complementing this is the notion of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), which encompasses voluntary, discretionary actions by employees that go beyond formal job responsibilities to support organizational effectiveness (Wibowo et al., 2023). Such behaviors are often driven by intrinsic motivation and a desire to contribute positively, which may be reinforced through organizational rewards. Rewards whether tangible like bonuses or intangible like recognition serve as vital tools to acknowledge employee achievements and reinforce desired behaviors. The linkage between performance-based rewards and innovation has been substantiated by those who argue that when employees perform well and workplace uncertainty is minimized, they are more likely to exhibit innovative behaviors. However, the pursuit of involvement and recognition can also introduce stress. Wibowo et al. (2024) highlights that work stress stems from factors such as interpersonal pressure, role ambiguity, job insecurity, and traumatic incidents, which can impair concentration and overall well-being. Interestingly, Palumbo et al. (2023) suggest that increased employee involvement while generally positive may paradoxically exacerbate psychosocial stress, especially if employees feel overwhelmed or inadequately supported.

Furthermore, the concept of locus of control expects employees to be responsible for their work, demonstrate work commitment, show high integrity towards the company where they work, be able to act objectively and independently in dealing with any problems, try to improve their competence and expertise and be able to apply the principles of the code of ethics for professional behavior (Rumen et al., 2024). To achieve organizational goals, high commitment is required from employees, thus each employee is expected to be able to achieve organizational goals through organizational citizenship behavior (Wibowo et al., 2023). Reward is an award for every employee who has succeeded in achieving the performance set

by the organization (Kamselem et al., 2022; Cai et al., 2020). There is a certain thing that organizational managers have to pay attention to which is the work stress that has to be managed well by the organization to avoid conflict so as to achieve organizational goals (Tsutsumi et al., 2020; Bonaiuto et al., 2022).

In this case, to see which variables can increase employee performance in hotels so that it becomes the basis for the problems of the research:

RQ1. Do variables such as locus of control, reward, work stress, organizational citizenship behavior have positive influence on employee performance?

RQ2. Do the variables of rewards and organizational citizenship behavior become significant or insignificant after being mediated by work stress?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Locus of Control

The concept of locus of control was first put forward by Rumen et al. (2024) stating that through an internal locus of control, employees are expected to be responsible for their work, show work commitment, show high integrity towards the company where they work, be able to be objective and independent in dealing with any problems, strive to improve their competence and expertise, and by the principles of the code of ethics for professional behavior. Locus of Control is a psychological concept that describes an individual's belief about the extent to which they can influence events and outcomes in their environment. According to Rumen et al. (2024), an internal locus of control is characterized by a sense of personal responsibility and agency. Employees with an internal locus of control tend to take ownership of their work, demonstrating a strong commitment to their roles and exhibiting high levels of integrity toward their organization.

Locus of Control is a fundamental psychological construct that influences how individuals interpret their ability to impact their environment and achieve desired outcomes. Rumen et al. (2024) emphasizes that employees possessing an internal locus of control view themselves as primary agents of change, believing that their actions, decisions, and efforts directly determine the results they obtain. This belief fosters a sense of personal responsibility, which manifests in behaviors such as high work commitment, ethical integrity, and proactive problem-solving. Such employees tend to be self-motivated, continuously seeking opportunities for self-improvement and skill development, aligning their actions with the principles of professional ethics and organizational values. They often exhibit independence in decision-making, demonstrating confidence in their judgment and ability to handle challenges without excessive reliance on external directives. This internal orientation not only enhances individual performance but also contributes positively to organizational culture by promoting accountability and ethical conduct. Moreover, employees with a strong internal locus of control are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors, as they believe their efforts can lead to meaningful change. Conversely, those with an **external locus of control** may perceive outcomes as being influenced by external forces such as luck, fate, or organizational politics, which can diminish initiative and motivation.

Daft (2022) states that locus of control is how each individual sees an event and has perspective on it, whether he or she can or cannot control the events occurred. Thus, locus of control is the reason how each individual sees an event happened in his/her life, thereby causing responsibility for him/herself or others. Caliendo et al. (2024) also believes that the locus of control is a reflection of how each individual has learned to understand what has happened to him/her. However, according to Rulinawaty et al. (2022), locus of control is an individual

personality that is able to distinguish between how they associate their responsibilities to every event with themselves (internal locus of control) and with external factors (external locus of control). Internal locus of control is an individual's belief that he or she has the highest power and control over positive and negative situations. Internal locus of control has inverse relationship with depression, as like an employee getting a lower workload than other employees (Kalargyrou et al., 2022).

Locus of control is a fundamental psychological construct that significantly influences how individuals perceive their ability to influence the events and outcomes in their lives. According to Daft (2022), it refers to an individual's perception of whether they have control over the events that occur to them. This perception shapes their sense of responsibility—whether they see themselves as the primary agents responsible for their successes and failures or attribute these outcomes to external forces beyond their influence. Caliendo et al. (2024) further elaborate that locus of control reflects the way individuals have learned to interpret and understand life events.

Rulinawaty et al. (2022) classify locus of control as a personality trait that enables individuals to distinguish between internal and external attributions of responsibility. Those with an internal locus of control believe they possess the power and agency to influence both positive and negative circumstances through their efforts, decisions, and actions. Conversely, individuals with an external locus of control tend to attribute outcomes to external factors such as luck, fate, or the influence of others, which diminishes their sense of personal responsibility. An important aspect of internal locus of control is its positive relationship with mental health, particularly its inverse correlation with depression. For instance, Kalargyrou et al. (2022) highlight that employees who perceive themselves as having control over their workload and work environment often experience lower levels of stress and depressive symptoms. This sense of empowerment fosters resilience, enhances motivation, and promotes proactive coping strategies in challenging situations.

Locus of control is a vital psychological attribute that shapes how individuals interpret their experiences and responsibilities. Developing an internal locus of control can contribute to better mental health, greater professional responsibility, and overall personal growth. Organizations and leaders can foster this mindset through empowerment strategies, supportive environments, and encouraging self-efficacy, thereby cultivating a more resilient and proactive workforce.

Research by Siwy et al. (2025) shows that work stress occurs at various companies, either it is high or low, and which in turn affects employee performance. Moreover, research conducted by Buccioli and Trucchi (2021) proves that through the locus of control, each individual shows an attitude of bargaining, interacting with each other, and trying to influence each other. Meanwhile, Research by Padmanabhan (2021)' shows that locus of control has positive and significant effects on employee performance and work stress. In contrast to the research conducted by Padmanabhan (2021), it proves that locus of control has a significant negative effect on employee performance, but it has a positive effect on work stress.

For this reason, hypotheses can be made as follows:

H₁ Locus of control has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H₂ Locus of control has a negative and significant effect on work stress.

H₃ Work stress mediates the effect of locus of control on employee performance.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Arkorful and Hilton (2021) were the first to study organizational citizenship behavior by considering matters related to innovation and behavior. Esquivel and Solis (2020) states that

innovative behavior and the behavior of each individual are related to other individuals who are in line with the goals of the organization that houses them. Wibowo et al. (2023) state that organizational citizenship behavior is something that is usually shown by every individual to achieve organizational goals. Waqiah et al. (2021) state that organizational citizenship behavior is an effort to achieve the best results for the success of the company, thus it requires high commitment from employees and organization to achieve the goals of the organization itself. Organizational citizenship behavior is a behavior carried out by each individual, whether working individually or in a team, to achieve organizational goals. This research is one of many topics been widely researched in the fields of organizational behavior and industrial psychology (Bolino et al., 2024).

Research by Arifah (2022) shows that work stress has a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior. However, research by Amin et al. (2020) shows that work stress does not affect organizational citizenship behavior. The result of the research conducted by Cek and Eyupoglu (2020), Abdel-Aziz (2021), and Gupta et al. (2022) shows that organizational citizenship behavior has a significant positive effect on employee performance. In the contrary, research by Sitepu et al. (2024) shows that organizational citizenship behavior does not have a direct correlation with employee performance. For this reason, hypotheses can be made as follows:

H₃ Organizational citizenship behavior has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H₄ Organizational citizenship behavior has a negative and significant effect on work stress.

H₉ Work stress mediates the effect of organizational citizenship behavior on employee performance.

Reward

According to Kartini et al. (2024), a reward is something given by an organization, either tangible or intangible to employees as a reward for the performance the employee has achieved. Thus, the employee is regarded as a successful individual at achieving the performance standards set by the organization so that they can meet their needs. In other words, reward is an award for every employee who has succeeded in achieving the performance set by the organization (Cai et al., 2020; Kamselem et al., 2022). Another opinion states that reward is an award or appreciation aiming to ensure that each employee makes every effort at work (Dewi et al., 2022). Therefore, Armstrong and Taylor (2020) believes that rewards consist of core values, structures, and processes where the core values must represent the company's philosophy to select and distribute the rewards, criteria and mechanisms for distributing it.

Rewards are recognized as incentives provided by organizations to their employees, which can be either tangible—such as monetary bonuses, promotions, or benefits—or intangible, like recognition, praise, or additional responsibilities. According to Kartini et al. (2024), rewards serve as a form of acknowledgment for employees who have demonstrated satisfactory performance, thereby positioning them as successful individuals in meeting the organizational standards. In essence, when employees achieve or surpass the performance goals set by their organization, they are rewarded as a form of recognition for their accomplishments.

Cai et al. (2020) and Kamselem et al. (2022) emphasize that rewards function as formal awards or incentives given to employees who have successfully met or exceeded performance expectations. These rewards not only acknowledge past achievements but also motivate continued effort and engagement in their roles. Dewi et al. (2022) add that rewards are essentially expressions of appreciation aimed at encouraging employees to put forth their best efforts consistently in the workplace.

Furthermore, Armstrong and Taylor (2020) provide a broader perspective by asserting that rewards comprise core values, organizational structures, and processes. The core values reflect the company's philosophy and principles that guide the selection and distribution of rewards, ensuring alignment with organizational culture and goals.

Rewards are incentives provided to employees who achieve or surpass organizational performance standards. These rewards serve to recognize individual or team accomplishments, motivate ongoing high performance, and reinforce the organizational culture and values. An effective reward system integrates both tangible and intangible incentives, aligned with organizational philosophy, and involves clear policies and communication strategies to ensure fairness and motivation across the workforce.

The result of the research conducted by Li et al. (2023) shows that rewards can increase productivity and employee performance in an organization because it can improve the welfare of employees. Furthermore, research by Kartini et al. (2024) shows the correlation of performing-based rewards in conditions of good employee performance and low uncertainty. (Klenowski et al., 2023; Ryvkin et al., 2024)'s research shows that rewards have a significant effect on work stress, but (Buccioli & Trucchi, 2021; Yi et al., 2023)'s shows that rewards do not have a positive effect on work stress because stress can blunt rewards sensitivity. For this reason, hypotheses can be made as follows:

H₅ Rewards have a negative and significant effect on work stress.

H₆ Rewards have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H₁₀ Work stress mediates the effect of rewards on employee performance.

Work Stress.

Work stress is a condition where every individual faces opportunities, demands, or resources whose uncertain and important results (Robbins & Judge, 2019). According to (Morán et al., 2023; Mansor et al., 2023), work stress is a common thing that every employee certainly face at work, thus (Morán et al., 2023) believe that workload should be reduced to reduce stress at work by improving working conditions, work quality, and benefits. Based on these definitions, work stress is a matter that organizations need to pay attention to so as to avoid conflict and to achieve organizational goals.

The result of the research conducted by Mansor et al. (2023) shows that work stress has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Mansor et al. (2023) state that excessive workload can increase work stress and reduce work quality. In contrast to (Wibowo et al., 2024)'s research, work stress has a negative and insignificant effect on employee performance. In addition, Abdullah (2020) shows that work stress does not have a positive and significant effect but has impact on employee performance. The result of research conducted by Morán et al. (2023) shows that excessive workload can worsen employee. Research by (Palumbo et al., 2023) affirms that employee involvement can worsen psychosocial stress in the workplace, while research by (Padmanabhan, 2021) also proves that work stress is negatively correlated with employee performance. Can employee involvement increase sources of psychosocial stress in the workplace, and increase individual job demands which ultimately can reduce employee performance? For this reason, a hypothesis can be made:

H₇ Work stress has a negative and significant effect on employee performance.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is an achievement corresponding to the organization's goals reached by each employee (Carvalho et al., 2020; Maley et al., 2021). Good employee performance is a goal that every organization wants to achieve (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou,

2019). The employee performance factor in the POST-COVID-19 is crucial thus strategic management development is much needed to improve organizational performance so that companies can survive facing increasingly fierce business competition. Based on the definitions of the experts, employee performance is the effort made by an organization to achieve its goals.

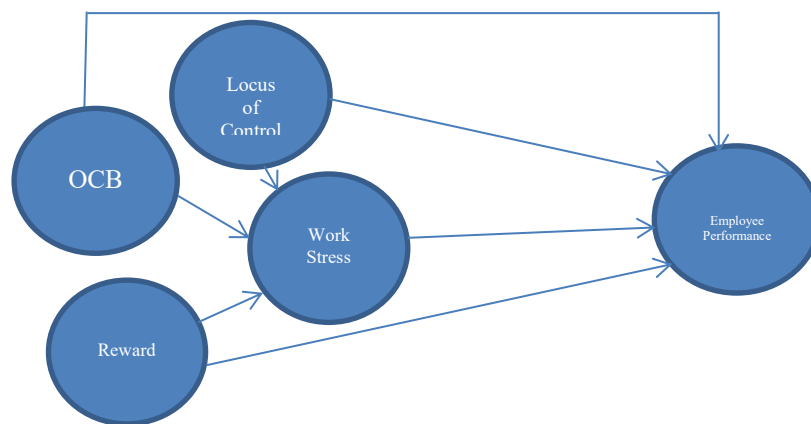


Figure 1. Research Model, 2022
 Source: Authors

RESEARCH METHOD

Samples were taken randomly from the population of four-star hotels in the Tangerang area and three-star hotels in the Yogyakarta area, totaling 187 people who have worked for a minimum of 2 (two) years from staff to manager level. The sampling techniques of integration in this research are based on area (*cluster random sampling*). The questionnaires were distributed to be filled out by 187 hotel employees for the employees at 1 (one) hotel in Tangerang and 2 (two) hotels in Yogyakarta. Data was subsequently analyzed using path analysis statistical tools. The analysis was carried out based on previous research and the theories underlying it.

Table 1. Definitions of Variables

No	Variables	Definitions	Indicators	Scales	Sources
1	Locus of Control	An individual personality that is able to distinguish between how they associate their responsibilities to every event with themselves (internal locus of control) and with external factors (external locus of control).	1. Responsibility (LC1) 2. Attitude (LC2) 3. Internal locus of control (LC3) 4. External locus of control (LC 4)	Likert	(Palau-Saumell et al., 2021; Rulinawaty et al., 2022)
2	Organizational Citizenship Behavior	An effort to achieve the best results for the success of the company, thus it requires high commitment from employees and the organization to achieve the goals of the organization itself.	1. Altruism (OCB1) 2. Courtesy (OCB 2) 3. Civic Virtue (OCB 3) 4. Conscientiousness (OCB 4) 5. Sportsmanship (OCB 5)	Likert	(Waqiah et al., 2021; Kaur & Kang, 2023)

3	Reward	An award or appreciation that aims to ensure that each employee puts in as much effort as possible at work.	1. Salary (R1) 2. Welfare (R2) 3. Career development (R3) 4. Awards (R4)	Likert	(Dewi et al., 2022)
4	Work Stress	A condition where every employee faces opportunities, demands, or resources.	1. Workload (WS1) 2. Role conflict (WS2) 3. Organizational environment (WS3) 4. Job security (WS4) 5. Shift work (WS5)	Likert	(Morán et al., 2023; Mansor et al., 2023)
5	Employee Performance	An achievement corresponding to organization's goals reached by each employee.	1. Satisfaction with the work environment (EP1) 2. Task performance (EP2) 3. Contextual performance (EP3) 4. Adaptive performance (EP4)	Likert	(Carvalho et al., 2020; Siwy et al., 2025)

Source: Research papers, 2022-2023

Measurement

All items of the questionnaire in this research were measured by using five-point Likert scale ranged from 5 (five) strongly agree to 1 (one) strongly disagree. This research uses path analysis. Hair et al. (2021) explained the selection of path analysis in consideration of this research is to identify the main determinant variables.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Respondent Profile	Total	Percentage
Gender		
1. Male	95	50,80%
2. Female	92	49,20%
Age		
1. 21-35 years old	137	73,26%
2. 36-50 years old	32	17,11%
3. > 51 years old	18	9,63 %
Level of Education		
1. Graduated from junior high school.	12	6,42 %
2. Graduated from high school / vocational high school.	150	80,22%
3. Graduated from undergraduate education.	25	13,36%

Source: Survey results, 2023

Validity and reliability results in Table 3 show that all of loading factor values are above 0.70, while the overall construct AVE value is also greater than 0.5, thus meeting the convergent validity criteria. Meanwhile, CR and CA values for all constructions are above the smallest value of 0.70. It shows that the overall construct meets the elements of reliability as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Loading Factor, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) & Cronbach Alpha (CA)

Factor Loading, Composite Reliability (CR)					
Average Variance (AVE), Cronbach Alpha (CA)					
Locus of Control	LC1	0.771	0.702	0,904	0,857
	LC2	0.811			
	LC3	0.900			
	LC4	0.866			
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	OCB1	0.790	0.649	0.902	0.863
	OCB2	0.722			
	OCB3	0.762			
	OCB4	0.865			
	OCB5	0.879			
Reward	R1	0.761	0.670	0.89	0.835
	R2	0.841			
	R3	0.847			
	R4	0.823			
Working Stress	WS1	0.724	0.529	0.849	0.777
	WS2	0.700			
	WS3	0.734			
	WS4	0.770			
	WS5	0.720			
Employee Performance	EP1	0.904	0.762	0.927	0.895
	EP2	0.903			
	EP3	0.832			
	EP4	0.850			

Evaluation of discriminant validity through the square root of AVE in Table 4 shows that the correlation of the observation variables with its constructs is higher than with the other constructs.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

	LC	OCB	R	WS	EP
LC	(0.838)	0.355	0.665	-0.782	0.715
OCB	0.355	(0.806)	0.337	-0.517	0.326
R	0.665	0.337	(0.819)	-0.719	0.616
WS	-0.782	-0.517	-0.719	(0.727)	-0.77
EP	0.715	0.326	0.616	-0.77	(0.873)

Source: Authors

The R^2 and Q^2 values in Table 5 show that all the constructions in this research can predict the model very well. The Tenenhaus GoF (GoF) index in this research produces a value of 0.703. It shows that the value is greater than 0.36. Thus, based on the Tenenhaus GoF (GoF) index, the PLS model in this research is stated to have high predictive power.

Table 5. Values of R^2 dan Q^2

Variable	R^2	Q^2
Working Stress	0.761	0.763
Employee Performance	0.732	0.688

Source: Authors

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of direct hypothesis testing as shown in Table 6 shows that there are two variables: Organizational citizenship behavior and rewards, which do not have a significant effect on employee performance. Thus, this research does not support the third and sixth hypotheses (H3 and H6), while locus of control and working stress have a significant effect on employee performance, thereby supporting the first and seventh hypotheses (H1 and H7). All exogenous variables in this research, which are locus of control, organizational citizenship behavior, and reward have significant effects on working stress, thus the results of this research support the second, fourth, and fifth hypotheses (H2, H4, and H5). For the structural model test as shown in Figure 2, only the first hypothesis (H1) has a positive and significant correlation, while the others, the second hypothesis (H2) has a negative and significant correlation, the third hypothesis (H3) has a positive and insignificant correlation, the fourth hypothesis (H4) has a negative and significant correlation, the fifth hypothesis (H5) has a negative and significant correlation, the sixth hypothesis (H6) has a negative and insignificant correlation, the seventh hypothesis (H7) has a negative and significant correlation.

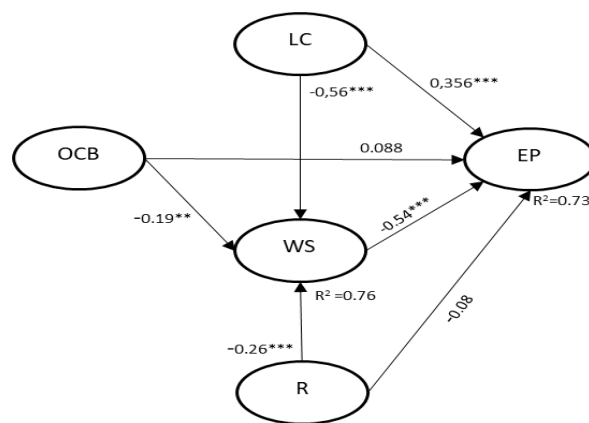


Figure 2. Structural Model
 Source: Authors

Table 6. Hypothesis Test for Direct Effect

Hypothesis	The Tested Result of Hypothesis		
	Direct Effect	P-Value	Test Result
H1	LC → EP	< 0.001	Supported
H2	LC → WS	< 0.001	Supported
H3	OCB → EP	0.112	Not Supported
H4	OCB → WS	0.004	Supported
H5	R → WS	< 0.001	Supported
H6	R → EP	0.454	Not Supported
H7	WS → EP	< 0.001	Supported

Source: Authors

Mediation testing in this research refers to (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The test results in Table 7 show that working stress fully mediates the effect of organizational citizenship behavior and rewards on employee performance, while working stress only partially mediates the effect of locus of control on employee performance.

Table 7. Hypothesis Test for Indirect and Mediating Effects

Hypothesis	Mediating Test						
	Direct Effect	P-Value	Test Result	Indirect Effect	P-Value	Test Result	Mediation Test

H8	LC → EP	< 0.001	Supported	LC → WS → EP	< 0.001	Supported	Partial Mediation
H9	OCB → EP	0.112	Not Supported	OCB → WS → EP	0.021	Supported	Full Mediation
H10	R → EP	0.454	Not Supported	R → WS → EP	0.003	Supported	Full Mediation

Source: Authors

The first variable, locus of control, has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The results of this study confirm the findings of Siwy et al. (2025), which indicate that employees' self-awareness of their duties and responsibilities improves their performance.

Locus of control has a negative and significant effect on work stress. This phenomenon shows that the more hotel employees are aware of their responsibilities in carrying out their work optimally according to their work targets, the more these employees will not face or feel stress at work. These results are not in line with (Padmanabhan, 2021)'s research. This research reveals that hospitality industry players need to develop a good recruitment system to get the "right person in the right position". Employees who are aware of their potential, confident, and responsible will have lower stress level and can improve their performance.

Meanwhile, organizational citizenship behavior as the next variable does not affect employee performance. It is not accordance with Sitepu et al. (2024)'s research that organizational citizenship behavior has a direct correlation with employee performance. This happens because the level of employee discipline, the ability of employees to solve problems, and the responsibility of each employee from the hotel industry as a research object are still suboptimal.

Organizational citizenship behavior has a negative and significant effect on work stress. It shows that the low level of employee awareness and commitment to produce good quality work means that employee's stress levels are higher because the employee's level of discipline, ability to solve problems, and responsibility are suboptimal. Then, rewards have a negative and significant effect on work stress. It also indicates the low rewards will increase work stress. In other words, to reduce work stress, one can give as many rewards as possible. These results are in line with the findings of Buccioli and Trucchi (2021) and Yi et al. (2023) which show that rewards do not have a positive effect on work stress because stress can blunt rewards sensitivity. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has a significant and negative impact on work stress, meaning that the higher the employees' awareness and willingness to engage in voluntary behaviors beyond their formal job responsibilities, the lower their levels of work-related stress tend to be. Conversely, when OCB levels are low—indicating a lack of discipline, problem-solving abilities, and a sense of responsibility—employees are more likely to experience increased stress. This is because employees with low OCB often face greater challenges in managing their tasks effectively, feel less supported, and carry heavier workloads, which collectively contribute to higher overall stress levels.

Furthermore, rewards do not affect employee performance. These results are not in line with the findings of (Li et al., 2023; Kartini et al., 2024). Hotel employees feel they do not deserve rewards because they have not been able to work optimally. This outcome contrasts with the results reported by Li et al. (2023) and Kartini et al. (2024), who found a positive correlation between rewards and performance levels. In this context, hotel employees perceive that they do not deserve rewards because they feel they have not been able to perform at their optimal level. This perception may stem from various factors, such as lack of confidence, dissatisfaction with their work, or external influences that diminish their motivation to seek or accept recognition and rewards. As a result, the expected motivational effect of rewards appears to be diminished among these employees, highlighting the need to explore underlying issues

affecting their perceptions and performance. The finding that rewards do not significantly impact employee performance presents an intriguing paradox, especially considering the widespread belief in positive reinforcement as a key motivator in organizational settings. This outcome diverges from prior research by Li et al. (2023) and Kartini et al. (2024), who demonstrated a clear link between reward systems and enhanced employee productivity. The discrepancy invites a deeper examination of the contextual and psychological factors that shape employee responses to rewards, particularly within the hospitality industry.

One critical factor influencing this dynamic is the perception of deservingness among hotel employees. Many staff members feel they do not merit rewards due to their own assessments of their performance. This sense of inadequacy may stem from various sources, including high job demands, insufficient training, or personal self-efficacy issues. When employees believe they have not performed well enough to warrant recognition, rewards can lose their motivational power and even generate feelings of guilt or unworthiness. Consequently, instead of fostering motivation, rewards may inadvertently reinforce negative self-perceptions, leading to disengagement or apathy. Moreover, the cultural and organizational environment plays a significant role in shaping employee attitudes towards rewards.

From an organizational perspective, these findings underscore the importance of understanding employee perceptions and intrinsic motivators rather than relying solely on traditional reward systems. Managers should consider personalized approaches that recognize individual efforts and address perceived shortcomings. Building a culture of trust, providing opportunities for professional growth, and encouraging open communication can help employees feel more deserving and receptive to rewards in the future.

The limited impact of rewards on employee performance in this context highlights the complex interplay between psychological perceptions, cultural factors, and organizational practices. Recognizing and addressing these underlying issues can lead to more effective motivation strategies, ultimately improving performance and job satisfaction within the hospitality sector.

The last variable, work stress, has a negative and significant effect on employee performance. This research proves that work stress must be managed very well so that employee performance remains good. It turns out that these results are in line with the findings of (Padmanabhan, 2021; Palumbo et al., 2023; Morán et al., 2023; Wibowo et al., 2024). In this regard, Mansor et al. (2023) provide research results that there is a significant but weak correlation between workload and employee performance and excessive workload can make employee performance poor. For this reason, hotel employees can work according to the targets set before and not overdo it to achieve maximum employee performance. Work stress has emerged as a critical factor influencing employee performance, particularly within the demanding environment of the hotel industry. The research findings clearly demonstrate that work stress has a negative and significant impact on employee performance. When employees experience high levels of stress, their ability to perform effectively diminishes, which can lead to decreased service quality, lower productivity, and increased turnover. These results underscore the importance of effective stress management strategies to maintain optimal employee performance. Stress can impair cognitive functions such as concentration, decision-making, and problem-solving, which are essential in delivering high-quality hospitality services. Furthermore, prolonged stress may lead to burnout, absenteeism, and a decline in morale, ultimately affecting the overall performance of hotel staff.

Research by Mansor et al. (2023) further clarifies that there is a significant but weak correlation between workload and employee performance. This indicates that while workload

influences performance, other factors also play a role in determining employee effectiveness. Excessive workload, in particular, has been identified as a key contributor to poor performance, as it overwhelms employees and hampers their ability to perform tasks efficiently. Therefore, managing workload and ensuring employees are not overburdened is vital for sustaining high performance levels.

Practical strategies for hotel management include setting realistic targets that employees can achieve without undue stress. Encouraging employees to work within their capacity, providing adequate support, and fostering a healthy work environment are essential steps. Work stress is a significant barrier to optimal employee performance in the hotel industry. Proper management of workload and stress levels is crucial for ensuring that employees can perform at their best, thereby enhancing service quality and organizational success. Recognizing the importance of a supportive work environment can lead to healthier, more productive staff who contribute positively to the hotel's reputation and growth. Work stress significantly influences employee performance, especially in the hospitality sector where service quality is directly linked to employee well-being. Research consistently shows that high levels of work stress have a negative and significant effect on employee performance. When employees are overwhelmed by stress, their ability to deliver excellent service diminishes, which can harm customer satisfaction and the hotel's reputation. Therefore, effective stress management is essential to sustain high levels of performance.

These findings align with prior studies by Padmanabhan (2021), Palumbo et al. (2023), Morán et al. (2023), and Wibowo et al. (2024), all of which highlight that excessive stress hampers cognitive functioning, decision-making, and overall productivity. Moreover, chronic stress can lead to health issues such as anxiety, depression, and burnout, impacting on employees' long-term health and organizational sustainability. In addition to performance, managing work stress is vital for safeguarding employee well-being. Overwork and persistent stress not only reduce efficiency but also diminish job satisfaction and morale, potentially leading to higher turnover rates.

Research by Mansor et al. (2023) indicates that while workload has a weak but significant correlation with performance, excessive workload specifically can impair employee effectiveness. This highlights the importance of setting realistic targets and ensuring employees are not overburdened, which helps prevent stress accumulation. Practical measures include implementing workload management practices, offering support resources, and fostering a positive work environment. Encouraging open communication about stress and providing stress reduction programs can further enhance employee resilience. Ultimately, hotel management must recognize that investing in employee well-being and workload balance is crucial for sustainable performance and organizational growth. Managing work stress is essential not only for maintaining high employee performance but also for safeguarding their health and ensuring the hotel's sustainable operation. Proactive stress management strategies create a healthier workplace, leading to better service, higher employee retention, and improved organizational outcomes.

Work stress successfully mediates locus of control with employee performance. It proves that every hotel employee has good awareness of the tasks given by the hotel management and they do not feel stressed. In fact, the more the hotel management monitors their employees, they will continue to work well. An interesting finding from the study is that work stress can serve as a mediating factor between locus of control and employee performance. In this context, a balanced level of supervision helps employees stay focused and committed, ultimately leading to improved performance. This highlights the importance of management practices that

foster a supportive environment—where employees feel accountable without being excessively stressed—thus promoting sustained high performance.

This research reveals that work stress can act as a mediator influencing the relationship between locus of control and employee performance. Specifically, hotel employees who possess a strong internal locus of control and are able to manage their work-related stress effectively tend to perform better. These findings underscore the importance of maintaining a balance between oversight and autonomy, as well as implementing effective stress management strategies to promote optimal performance among hotel staff.

Work stress has proven to be able to mediate the effect of organizational citizenship behavior on employee performance. Work stress is a matter that hotel management needs to pay attention to so that its goals can be achieved optimally. Work stress mediates organizational citizenship behavior on employee performance because if hotel employees are given maximum targets at work, they will help each other in the team so that they can further improve employee performance. This proves that the increasing, complex and fast-paced demands of work require every hotel employee to be able to multitask and be efficient with time and energy as well as to be able to manage the stress arising in each of them so that it does not affect desired work output quality by working together in a team so that the employee performance can reach to the maximum.

In the hospitality industry, organizational success and goal achievement greatly depend on employee performance. Numerous factors influence this performance, including organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and work-related stress. Recent research indicates that work stress not only impacts employee performance directly but also acts as a mediator linking OCB to overall employee effectiveness. This discovery enhances our understanding of how psychological and behavioral factors interact within the dynamic and challenging hotel environment.

The findings reveal that work stress plays a crucial mediating role between organizational citizenship behavior and employee performance. Generally, OCB refers to voluntary actions by employees that are not explicitly required but benefit the organization, such as helping colleagues, displaying a positive attitude, or taking initiative. When employees demonstrate these behaviors, they contribute to a positive work atmosphere and improve team efficiency.

However, these positive behaviors do not operate in isolation—they are influenced by the level of stress experienced at work. The study suggests that employees who can manage their stress effectively will see their OCBs translate into better performance. Conversely, if stress is unmanaged, it can diminish the positive effects of OCB and potentially lower overall performance. Hotels are highly competitive and fast-paced environments that often demand employees to work under significant pressure. Ambitious targets and high customer expectations make the job complex and constantly changing. Therefore, hotel management must pay serious attention to work stress among employees. If not properly managed, stress can lead to burnout, reduced motivation, and compromised service quality. Interestingly, the research also shows that work stress can act as a motivator when employees are given challenging goals. Under these circumstances, employees tend to support each other and collaborate to meet their targets. This implies that high demands and pressures can foster teamwork and solidarity, ultimately boosting employee performance.

The findings underscore that work stress plays an important mediating role in the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and employee performance in hotel settings. Hotel management should focus on creating an environment that supports stress management, promotes teamwork, and sets achievable yet challenging targets. By doing so, employee performance can be maximized, leading to the achievement of organizational goals.

Such strategies not only enhance productivity and service quality but also contribute to the long-term well-being of employees.

Work stress is proven to be able to mediate the effect of rewards on employee performance. Rewards have a significant effect on employee performance in the presence of work stress because the more rewards given by hotel management to employees who have worked in accordance with high management demands and targets, the more optimal employee performance will be. This proves that rewards are important if hotel employees' work in according to the performance standards set by hotel management so that employee performance is maximized.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the organizational behavior literature by emphasizing the mediating role of work stress in explaining how organizational and individual factors influence employee performance in the hospitality sector. The findings suggest that work stress functions as an important psychological mechanism that links rewards and organizational citizenship behavior to employee performance. By positioning work stress as a mediator, this study provides a more nuanced understanding of how workplace conditions shape employee outcomes in service-oriented organizations.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the empirical data were collected from only three hotels, one in Tangerang and two in Yogyakarta which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or hospitality contexts. Future studies should involve a broader sample across different geographical locations and hotel categories to enhance external validity. Second, this study employed a cross-sectional research design, which restricts the ability to capture causal relationships and changes over time. Longitudinal research could provide deeper insights into how work stress and employee performance evolve in dynamic work environments. Third, this study focused on a limited number of predictors of employee performance. Future research may extend the model by incorporating additional variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, job satisfaction, or employee engagement to develop a more comprehensive framework for understanding employee performance in the hospitality industry.

By addressing these limitations, future research can further refine theoretical models explaining employee performance and provide stronger empirical evidence for managing human resources in the hospitality sector.

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