

# The Effect Of The Psychological Work Environment On The Performance Of Employees With Work Stress As A Variable Intervening (Employees Of The Sales Division At PT. Good Sale Tech)

Original Article

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## Abstract

The work environment is an organizational element as a social system that has a strong influence on the formation of individual interests in the organization and affects organizational achievement. The work environment itself consists of a physical and non-physical work environment that is inherent in employees, so that it cannot be separated from efforts for employee performance and avoiding employee work stress. The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of the psychological work environment on employee performance, with work stress as an intervening variable, in Sales Division Employees at PT. Good Sale Tech. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The results of the study showed that the work environment had a positive and significant effect on employee performance, the work environment had a positive and significant effect on employee work stress, and the work environment had a significant positive effect on employee performance and work stress. Work stress can mediate the relationship between the psychological work environment and performance, where stress arises due to a high workload and affects employee performance in a decreasing manner.

**Keywords:** Psychological Work Environment, Employee Performance, Work Stress.

## 1. Introduction

Human resources are strategic assets that determine the sustainability and competitiveness of an organization. The success of a company is not solely determined by technological sophistication or the availability of capital, but is highly dependent on the quality of its human resource management. Modern human resource management is seen as a strategic function that is not only oriented towards short-term performance improvement but also plays a role in creating sustainable competitive advantage through effective and future-oriented human management (Holbeche, 2022). Therefore, optimal planning and management of human resources is an important prerequisite in creating a conducive and productive work environment.

One of the crucial aspects of human resource management is the psychological work environment. The psychological work environment reflects the non-physical conditions that employees feel, such as interpersonal relationships, supervisor support, role clarity, a sense of security, and an emotional atmosphere at work. The psychological work environment can have



a positive and negative influence on employee behavior and performance. A supportive work environment is able to increase motivation, engagement, and performance, while an uncondusive work environment has the potential to cause stress, fatigue, and decreased productivity (Rivai & Sagala, 2021). Thus, the psychological work environment becomes an important element in the social system of the organization that directly affects the achievement of the company's goals.

Various cutting-edge studies show that a work environment that is oriented to the psychological needs of employees is able to drive significant performance improvements. A safe, comfortable, and harmonious work environment allows employees to carry out their duties optimally, healthily, and sustainably (Ramdhan et al., 2023; Kuncoroyekti & Yuniawan, 2024). On the other hand, a monotonous, less supportive, and less positive interaction can reduce work morale and demand greater work time and energy, resulting in an impact on work system inefficiency and decreased performance (Agus & Marpaung, 2023).

Employee performance is the main indicator of organizational success in achieving short-term and long-term goals. Performance is defined as the result of an employee's work, both in quality and quantity, in accordance with the responsibilities given to him (Mangkunegara, 2017). Performance measurement can be seen through work productivity, target achievement, quality of work results, and individual contributions in the team supported by creativity, commitment, and responsibility (Widyaningrum & Wuryaningsih, 2021). To achieve optimal performance, organizations need to pay attention to various determining factors, including the work environment and the employee's work stress level (Kasmir, 2019).

In addition to the psychological work environment, work stress is an important factor that also affects employee performance. Work stress arises when there is a mismatch between job demands and individual abilities, which impacts the physiological, emotional, and cognitive state of employees (Vanchapo, 2021). National and international data show that the level of work stress is still relatively high. A Gallup survey reported that the level of work stress in the Southeast Asian region increased from 31% in 2022 to 41% in 2023 (Sadya, 2022; Ahdiat, 2024). This condition shows that the psychological well-being of employees is still a serious challenge in the modern world of work.

Poorly managed work stress can lead to burnout, physical and mental health problems, and decreased performance quality. Recent research shows that work fatigue contributes significantly to the increase in human error and the decrease in employee work endurance (Berdi & Narimawati, 2022). Therefore, good psychological work environment management is the key to reducing work stress levels while continuously improving employee performance.

Although many studies have examined the relationship between work environment, work stress, and employee performance, there are still relevant research gaps that need to be investigated further. Most previous studies have focused on the banking, manufacturing, or public service sector in general, while studies that specifically examine the sales division of the cosmetics industry are still very limited. The cosmetics industry has unique characteristics in the form of fierce market competition, high sales targets, and intensive interaction demands with internal and external parties, which have the potential to produce different stress and performance patterns (Alqorrib et al., 2023).

PT. Good Sale Tech, as a company engaged in e-commerce solutions and digital technology with a focus on the care and beauty industry, places the sales division as the main driver of the company's revenue. However, based on initial observations and management inputs, there are indications of fluctuations in the productivity of sales division employees, which are allegedly related to psychological work environment conditions that are not fully

supportive, such as monotonous work, suboptimal work facilities, and less harmonious working relationships both internally and with external subdistributors.

Recent research findings show that the work environment does not always have a direct influence on employee performance, but can instead work through certain psychological mechanisms, such as work stress. Research by Izzatul Amiq (2025) proves that work stress is able to mediate the relationship between the work environment and employee performance significantly. These findings are in line with the results of research by Ramdhan et al. (2023) and Kuncoroyekti & Yuniawan (2024), but in contrast to Alqorrib et al. (2023) who found that the work environment does not have a direct effect on performance. These differences in findings indicate the importance of examining the role of work stress as an intervening variable in the relationship between the psychological work environment and employee performance.

Based on this background, this research is focused on answering several key questions, namely:

- 1) How does the psychological work environment affect the performance of Sales Division Employees at PT? Good Sale Tech?
- 2) How does the psychological work environment affect work stress as an intervening variable in the Sales Division of PT? Good Sale Tech?
- 3) How does the psychological work environment affect employee performance with work stress as an intervening variable in Sales Division Employees at PT? Good Sale Tech?
- 4) Does work stress play a role as an intervening variable in mediating the influence of the psychological work environment on employee performance in the Sales Division of PT? Good Sale Tech?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Psychological Work Environment

The psychological work environment is a non-physical dimension of the workplace that significantly affects the mental and emotional state, attitudes, and behaviors of employees. This concept focuses more on employees' perception and subjective experience of aspects in the workplace that are not in the form of physical facilities. Various experts have provided definitions of the psychological work environment. Robbins and Judge (2018) define the work environment as everything around an employee that can influence him or her in carrying out the job, including physical and non-physical factors. The psychological work environment specifically refers to the organizational climate, company culture, and interpersonal relationship dynamics. Schneider, Ehrhart, and Macey (2013) in the concept of organizational climate that is close to the psychological work environment, argue that this is a shared perception of practices, procedures, and expectations felt by organizational members. This perception then influences employee behavior and attitudes. Glisson and Durick (1988) emphasized that the psychological work environment includes support from superiors and colleagues, autonomy in work, feedback given, and clarity of roles and tasks carried out by employees.

From the various definitions above, it can be concluded that the psychological work environment encompasses various dimensions that shape employees' perception of their workplace, such as:

- a. Organizational Support. The extent to which employees feel valued and supported by management and the organization.

- b. Support from Co-workers and Superiors. Availability of help and guidance from colleagues and managers.
- c. Work Autonomy. The degree of freedom and control that employees have in determining how they work.
- d. Clarity of Roles. Employees' understanding of the tasks, responsibilities, and expectations at hand.
- e. Development Opportunities. Opportunities to learn, grow, and advance in careers.
- f. Procedural and Distributive Justice. Perceptions of fairness in decision-making and distribution of rewards or workloads.
- g. Organizational Culture: The shared values, norms, and beliefs that guide behavior in the organization.

## 2.2. Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the results of work and behaviors performed by individuals in the organization that are relevant to the organization's goals. Performance is not only about how much work is completed, but also about how the work is done and its impact on the company's goals. Bernardin and Russell (1993) define performance as a record of the results produced from the function of a particular job or activity over a period of time. They emphasize that performance should be something observable and measurable. Mathis and Jackson (2006) state that employee performance is what employees do or don't do. This includes the quantity, quality, timeliness, and effectiveness of the use of resources in achieving the goals of the job. Gibson, Ivancevich, and Donnelly (1996) define performance as a function of organizational ability, effort, and support. This means that performance is the result of how an employee uses his or her abilities, how much effort he or she puts in, and how well the support is provided by the organization (Dipoatmodjo, T. S. P., 2024; Khairinnisai et al., 2023).

Based on the above definition, employee performance can be understood as the level of success of an individual in carrying out his or her duties and responsibilities in accordance with the standards set by the organization, which contributes to the achievement of organizational goals.

Employee performance is generally measured through several dimensions, which vary depending on the type of work and the organization's goals. Some commonly used dimensions include:

- a) Quality of Work. The level of accuracy and completeness, and accuracy of the work.
- b) Quantity of Work. The amount of output generated in a given period of time.
- c) Punctuality. The extent to which the work is completed according to the specified schedule.
- d) Effectiveness. Ability to achieve job goals with available resources.
- e) Initiative. The level of proactivity and creativity in solving problems or looking for new opportunities.
- f) Adaptability. Flexibility in the face of changes and diverse job demands.
- g) Cooperation (teamwork). Ability to work effectively with colleagues to achieve common goals.
- h) Communication. Effectiveness in conveying information and listening.

In the context of the sales division, dimensions such as quantity (number of sales, number of leads), quality (customer satisfaction, repeat orders), and timeliness (fulfillment of targets) will be very relevant.

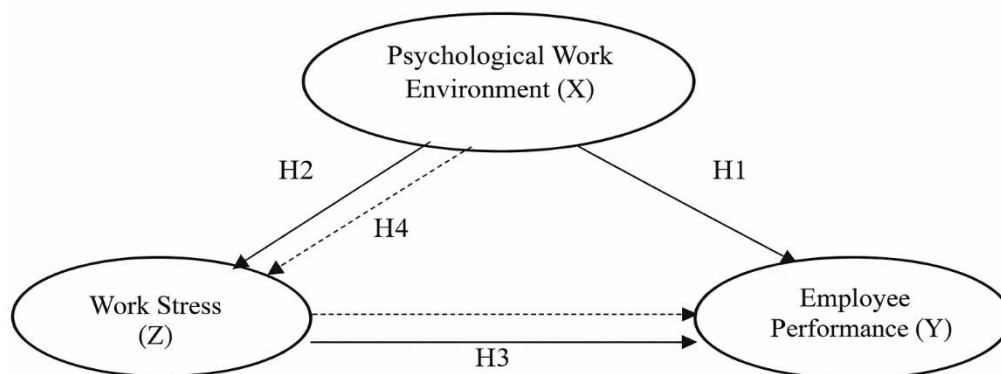
### 2.3. Work Stress

Work stress is an individual's adaptive response to the pressures or demands that come from the work environment, which, if excessive or prolonged, can have a negative impact on the physical and psychological environment. The term work stress is often used to describe an imbalance between the demands of the job and the ability or resources that individuals have to deal with it.

Selye (1974), as a pioneer in the study of stress, defined stress as the body's non-specific response to any demands placed on it. In the context of work, stress is an individual's response to a challenging or threatening work situation. Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) define work stress as an adaptive response mediated by individual differences and/or psychological processes, which are the consequences of external actions, situations, or events that place excessive psychological and/or physical demands on a person. (Robbins and Judge, 2018); Musa, C. I. 2024) state that work stress is a dynamic condition in which individuals are faced with an opportunity, limitation, or demand related to what they want, and the outcome is considered important and uncertain.

From various definitions, it can be concluded that work stress is a condition in which the demands of the job exceed the capacity or resources that the employee has, causing a negative response both physically and psychologically.

### 2.4. Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1 . Conceptual Framework**

### 2.5. Hypothesis

- 1) H1: The psychological work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance in the Sales Division of PT. Good Sale Tech.
- 2) H2: The psychological work environment has a negative and significant effect on work stress in the Sales Division of PT. Good Sale Tech.
- 3) H3: Work stress has a negative effect on employee performance in the Sales Division of PT. Good Sale Tech.
- 4) H4: Work stress mediates the influence of the psychological work environment on employee performance in the Sales Division of PT. Good Sale Tech.

## 3. Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to test the causal relationship between the psychological work environment and employee performance

and work stress as an intervening variable. The research was carried out on employees of the Sales Division at PT. Good Sale Tech. The research population is 130 employees of the Sales Division. The sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 10%, so that a minimum sample of 57 respondents was obtained. The sampling technique uses purposive sampling with the criteria of active employees, having a minimum working period of three months, and willing to be respondents. The data used were primary data collected through the distribution of a five-point Likert scale-based questionnaire (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Psychological work environment variables were measured through indicators of supervisor support, peer support, work autonomy, role clarity, and career development opportunities. Work stress variables are measured through workload, time pressure, role ambiguity, role conflict, and lack of social support. Meanwhile, employee performance is measured through sales quality, sales quantity, punctuality, initiative, and adaptability. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS) with the help of SmartPLS 3.3.3 software. Model evaluation is carried out through two stages, namely external model testing to assess the validity and reliability of the construct (outer loading >0.70; AVE >0.50; Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha >0.70), as well as internal model testing to assess the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and Goodness of Fit (GoF). Hypothesis testing was carried out through a bootstrapping procedure with 500 resamples at a significance level of 5% (t-statistics >1.96). The mediation test was carried out by analyzing indirect effects to determine the role of work stress as an intervening variable in the research model.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

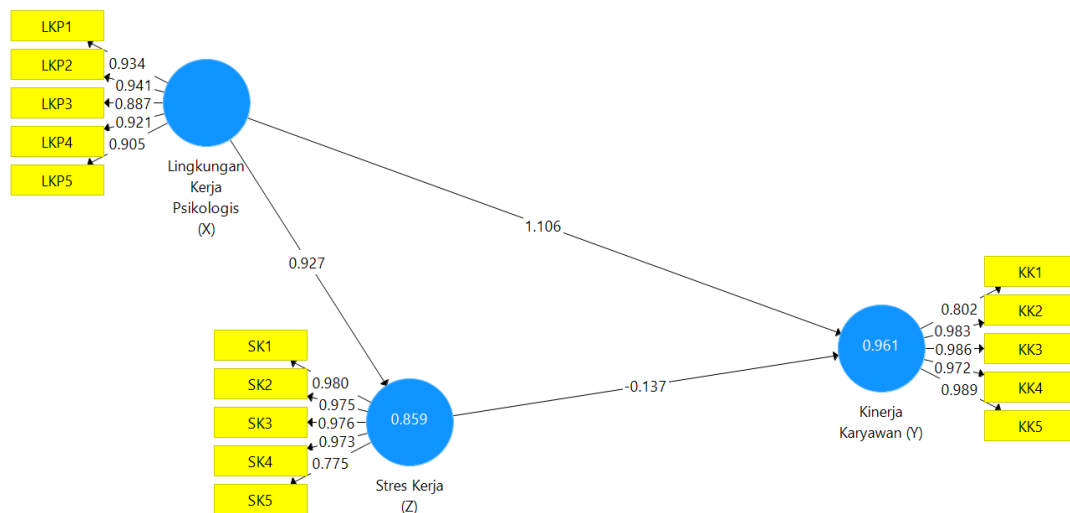


Figure 2. SEM-PLS Result

The results of data analysis were carried out using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the influence of the quality of human resources (workers) services on customer satisfaction with disconfirmation as a mediating variable. Below is a table of the results of the analysis along with their explanations.

##### 4.1. Evaluation of Measurement Models (Outer Model)

Table 1 shows the loading value and validity of each indicator used in this study.

	Employee Performance (Y)	Psychological Work Environment (X)	Work Stress (Z)
KK1	0.802		
KK2	0.983		
KK3	0.986		
CD4	0.972		
KK5	0.989		
LKP1		0.934	
LKP2		0.941	
LKP3		0.887	
LKP4		0.921	
LKP5		0.905	
SK1			0.980
SK2			0.975
SK3			0.976
SK4			0.973
SK5			0.775

All indicators show an Outer Loading value above 0.70, indicating that they have excellent convergent validity and are reliable in measuring the construct in question.

#### 4.2. Construct Reliability Testing

Table 2 shows the results of the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability.

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Performance (Y)	0.971	0.975	0.978	0.901
Psychological Work Environment (X)	0.953	0.954	0.964	0.842
Work Stress (Z)	0.965	0.964	0.974	0.882

All constructs have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70, which indicates an excellent level of internal consistency. This indicates that the research instrument can be relied upon to measure the desired construct.

#### 4.3. Evaluation of Structural Models (Inner Model)

Table 3 shows the results of the R<sup>2</sup> test.

	R Square
Employee Performance (Y)	0.961
Work Stress (Z)	0.859

The R-squared value for Employee Performance (Y) of 0.961 indicates that 96.1% of the variation in employee performance in the Sales Division of PT. Good Sale Tech can be explained by the variables that affect it in the model, namely Psychological Work Environment (X) and Work Stress (Z). Furthermore, the R Square value for Work Stress (Z) of 0.859 indicates that 85.9% of employee work stress variations can be explained by the Psychological Work Environment (X) variable.

#### 4.4. Significance and Direct Impact Test

Table 4 presents the results of the significance test of direct and indirect influences between variables.

Relationship	$\beta$	T-value	P-values	Decision
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H1	Psychological Work Environment (X) -> Employee Performance (Y)	1.106	9.145	0.000	Confirmed
H2	Psychological Work Environment (X) -> Work Stress (Z)	0.927	33.245	0.000	Confirmed
H3	Work Stress (Z) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0.537	7.075	0.000	Confirmed
H4	Psychological Work Environment (X) -> Work Stress (Z) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0.327	5.053	0.003	Confirmed

The results of the hypothesis test showed that all relationships between variables in the research model were statistically significant. The direct influence of the Psychological Work Environment on Employee Performance (H1) obtained a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 1.106 with a t-statistic value of 9.145 and a p-value of 0.000 ( $<0.05$ ), so that the hypothesis was accepted. These findings indicate that the more positive the employee's perception of the psychological work environment, including supervisor support, co-worker support, role clarity, and autonomy, the higher the level of performance produced. Practically, the conducive work psychological conditions in the Sales Division of PT. Good Sales Tech contributes significantly to the achievement of targets and work effectiveness.

Furthermore, the effect of Psychological Work Environment on Work Stress (H2) showed a  $\beta$  of 0.927 with a t-statistic of 33.245 and a p-value of 0.000. A very high t-value signifies a strong and significant relationship. These results confirm that changes in the quality of the psychological work environment significantly affect employees' work stress levels. In addition, Work Stress has been shown to have a significant effect on Employee Performance (H3) with a  $\beta$  of 0.537, t-statistic 7.075, and p-value of 0.000. This means that work stress levels have a real contribution to the variation in employee performance in structural models.

Mediation effect testing (H4) showed that the indirect influence of the Psychological Work Environment on Employee Performance through Work Stress had a  $\beta$  coefficient of 0.327 with a t-statistic of 5.053 and a p-value of 0.003 ( $<0.05$ ). This confirms that Work Stress plays a significant intervening variable in explaining the relationship. Thus, the empirical model shows that employee performance is not only directly influenced by the psychological work environment, but also through psychological mechanisms in the form of the level of work stress experienced by employees.

## 4.5. Discussion

### a) Psychological Work Environment → Employee Performance

The findings show that the psychological work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Conceptually, the psychological work environment includes supervisor support, peer support, role clarity, organizational fairness, and participation in decision-making. In the framework of Job Demands–Resources (JD-R), psychological resources (job resources) increase intrinsic motivation and work engagement, which ultimately drives task performance and contextual performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022; Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Cutting-edge empirical evidence also confirms that perceived organizational support and supervisory support are directly associated with improved individual performance (Miao et al., 2021; Kim & Beehr, 2022).

In the context of sales work that is full of targets and customer pressure, psychological support serves as a "buffer" against fatigue and demotivation. Role clarity has consistently been shown to increase work effectiveness by reducing ambiguity and role conflicts (Sonnentag et al., 2023). In addition, peer support strengthens the self-efficacy and resilience of salespeople (Karatepe et al., 2021). In the Sales Division, practices such as transparent KPI briefings, regular coaching, and appreciation for achievements strengthen motivation and consistency in achieving targets. Thus, these findings confirm that an organization's investment in a supportive psychological climate is a strategic determinant for sustainable performance.

### **b) Psychological Work Environment → Work Stress**

The study's results confirmed that the psychological work environment has a negative and significant impact on work stress. Theoretically, stress arises when the demands of the job exceed the resources of the individual. The JD-R model states that the availability of job resources such as social support, role clarity, and organizational fairness lowers the perception of burden and prevents psychological strain (Harms et al., 2021; Lesener et al., 2022). In other words, a positive psychological work environment functions as a protective mechanism against distress.

In sales work, target pressure, customer rejection, and internal competition have the potential to trigger anxiety and emotional exhaustion. However, supportive leadership has been shown to improve psychological safety and reduce stress (Nielsen et al., 2021). Role ambiguity was consistently positively associated with stress, while clarity of tasks and KPIs decreased it (Kundi et al., 2021). In addition, the perception of fairness in the incentive system and performance evaluation suppresses psychological tension (Ahmad et al., 2022).

In the Sales Division, open communication practices, constructive performance evaluations, and incentive transparency help reduce uncertainty and anxiety. A supportive environment allows sales to interpret pressure as a manageable challenge, not a threat. These findings confirm that strengthening the psychological climate is not just a performance improvement strategy, but also a preventive intervention against work stress.

### **c) Work Stress → Employee Performance**

This study shows that work stress has a negative effect on employee performance. The organizational behavior literature distinguishes between eustress (positive stress) and distress (adverse stress); In the context of high sales targets, stress tends to be distress and has an impact on decreased concentration, decision quality, and work energy (LePine et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2023). Chronic stress is also correlated with emotional exhaustion and burnout, which lowers productivity (Zhang et al., 2021).

In sales work, performance is largely determined by emotional resilience, persuasiveness, and consistency of customer follow-up. Excessive stress hinders effective communication, increases product misinformation, and decreases the intensity of sales efforts. Longitudinal studies show that chronic stress contributes to a decline in long-term performance as well as an increase in turnover intention (Lee et al., 2022). The impact on the organization is not only on the decline in sales, but also on the increase in recruitment and training costs due to sales turnover.

In practice in the Sales Division, indications of high stress can be seen from emotional exhaustion and decreased fighting power after customer rejection. This confirms that stress management is a key variable in performance management. Without intervention on the source of stress, target or incentive enhancement strategies are potentially counterproductive.

Therefore, these findings confirm the importance of a management approach that balances work demands and resources.

#### **d) The Role of Work Stress Mediation**

The mediation hypothesis suggests that work stress mediates the influence of the psychological work environment on employee performance. Recent literature supports this mechanism through a mediation model within the JD-R framework, where job resources improve performance by decreasing strain and fatigue (Bakker et al., 2023; Lesener et al., 2022). Thus, the influence of the work environment on performance is not solely direct, but also through psychological pathways in the form of stress reduction.

In the context of the Sales Division, when organizations strengthen supervisory support, KPI clarity, and incentive fairness, the impact is first seen in a decrease in anxiety and work pressure. Once stress levels decrease, employees show higher focus, motivation, and performance stability. The study of Molino et al. (2021) shows that work stress significantly mediates the relationship between job resources and performance in target-oriented jobs. Similarly, Kundi and Badar (2021) found that the positive effects of the work environment on performance will weaken if stress is not managed systematically.

These findings indicate partial mediation, meaning that the psychological work environment still has a direct influence on performance, but the effect is amplified through reduced stress. Managerially, the implications are clear: sales performance improvement strategies do not focus enough on financial targets and incentives, but must be integrated with the creation of a supportive, fair, and transparent work climate. With this approach, performance improvement becomes more stable, adaptive, and sustainable in the face of competitive market dynamics.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study aims to analyze the influence of the psychological work environment on the performance of employees with work stress as a mediating variable in the Sales Division of PT. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that the psychological work environment has a strategic role in improving employee performance. Supervisor support, role clarity, harmonious working relationships, and organizational fairness have been proven to have a positive and significant effect on the performance of sales personnel. This shows that the achievement of sales targets and work effectiveness is not only determined by technical ability, but also by the quality of the psychological state that employees feel during work. In addition, the psychological work environment has been shown to have a negative and significant effect on work stress, which means that the more conducive the work environment is felt, the lower the level of stress experienced by employees. This study also found that work stress has a negative effect on performance, so high work pressure can reduce focus, motivation, and emotional endurance of sales personnel. Furthermore, work stress has been shown to mediate the influence of the psychological work environment on employee performance, so that this influence does not only occur directly but also through a mechanism to reduce work stress. Thus, the management of the psychological work environment and work stress needs to be carried out simultaneously as part of a sustainable performance improvement strategy. Based on these findings, company management is advised to strengthen supportive leadership, set realistic and transparent targets, develop stress

management programs such as regular coaching and team discussion forums, and create a fair and appreciative work culture. For academics and researchers, this research can be a reference in the development of human resource management studies, with recommendations to add other variables such as work engagement or job satisfaction, using a longitudinal design, and expanding the research object so that the research results have a wider generalization power.

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