



Managing Employee Performance in the Palm Oil Plantation Industry: The Strategic Roles of Workload, Work Environment, and Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to examine the effect of workload, work environment, and job satisfaction on employee performance, both simultaneously and partially, at PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin, a palm-oil plantation company that has experienced a persistent decline in production-target achievement (from 99% in 2019–2020 to 76% in 2023–2024).

Methodology: An associative quantitative design was employed. The population consisted of 373 employees, and a sample of 79 respondents was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error and probability sampling technique. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire measured on a Likert-type scale and were supplemented by secondary company data. Instrument quality was verified through validity and reliability testing, and hypotheses were examined using multiple linear regression analysis, the F-test (simultaneous), the t-test (partial), and the coefficient of determination, at a 10% significance level.

Results: The multiple regression analysis indicates that workload, work environment, and job satisfaction jointly influence employee performance. The F-test confirms a statistically significant simultaneous effect of the three predictors, while the t-test confirms that each variable—workload, work environment, and job satisfaction—has a significant partial effect on employee performance. The coefficient of determination shows that the three predictors jointly explain 54.5% of the variance in employee performance, while the remaining 45.5% is explained by variables outside the scope of this study.

Conclusions: Workload, work environment, and job satisfaction are significant determinants of employee performance at PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin. Managerial attention to workload distribution, physical working conditions, and employee satisfaction is therefore essential for improving organizational performance and closing the persistent production-target gap.

Keywords:

workload; work environment; job satisfaction; employee performance; plantation industry.

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INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive global business environment, organizations must manage their capital, material, and human resources effectively to survive and grow. Among these resources, human capital is regarded as the most critical, since employees provide the talent, energy, and creativity that organizations depend on to achieve their strategic objectives (Ajabar, 2020; Becker & Huselid, 2006, p. 904; Wujarso et al., 2021, p. 3053). As global competition intensifies, companies are increasingly required to optimize the performance of their human resources through planned and systematic management, because organizational success ultimately rests on the extent to which individual employees can carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively (Ehsan & Ali, 2019; Maslan et al., 2024, p. 2416).

Employee performance is defined as the quantity and quality of work achieved by an individual or group in fulfilling their assigned duties, in accordance with the responsibilities delegated to them, and in a manner consistent with organizational norms and ethics (Afandi, 2018; Emmanuela et al., 2023, p. 212; Isa & Indrayati, 2023, p. 2). Numerous studies have identified a range of antecedents of employee performance, among which workload, work environment, and job satisfaction are consistently emphasized. Workload refers to the set of activities or tasks that must be completed by an organizational unit or individual within a specified time frame (Koesomowidjojo, 2018; Westover, 2024); excessive workload, if left unmanaged, has the potential to reduce productivity and increase job-related stress. The work environment encompasses the physical and non-physical conditions surrounding employees—such as lighting, temperature, ventilation, noise, and workspace design—that affect their ability to perform tasks effectively (Afandi, 2018; Saidi et al., 2019, p. 15). Job satisfaction, in turn, reflects an employee's emotional state, whether pleasant or unpleasant, in relation to how they perceive their job and the surrounding work environment (Lintanga & Rathakrishnan, 2024, p. 41; Sutrisno,

2017; Waqas et al., 2014, p. 7).

PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin is a plantation company engaged in the cultivation, maintenance, and sale of palm-oil products. A preliminary investigation revealed a persistent and worsening decline in production-target achievement over a six-year period: from 99% in 2019, 99% in 2020, and 97% in 2021, to 82% in 2022, and further down to 76% in both 2023 and 2024. This declining trend suggests underlying organizational problems, which a preliminary survey of 30 employees attributed to excessive workload, an unsupportive work environment, and low job satisfaction—factors that collectively appear to constrain employee performance and, by extension, the company's overall productivity.

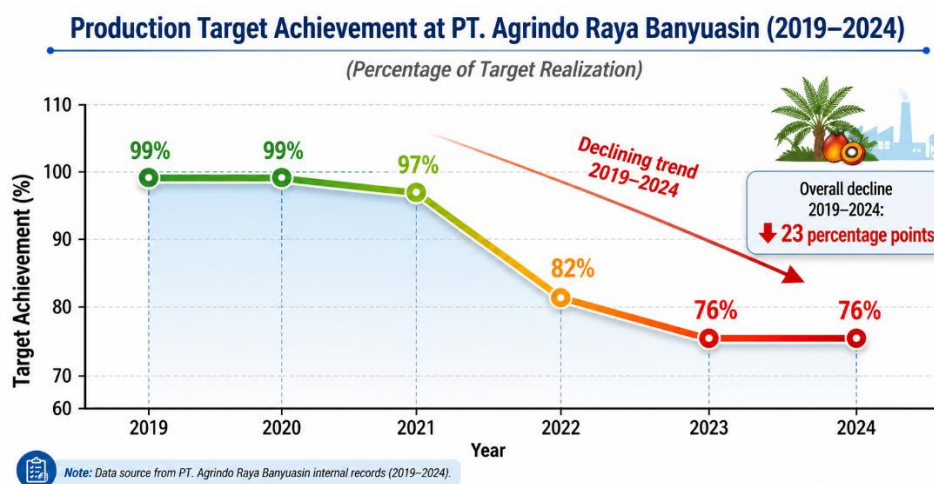


Figure 1. Trend of Production Target Achievement at PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin (2019–2024)

A review of prior studies shows mixed but generally supportive evidence for the relationships among these variables. Indonesia & Nabawi (2019) found that work environment, job satisfaction, and workload jointly and partially affect employee performance in a government-institution setting. Sihombing & Tinambunan (2022) reported a significant effect of workload and motivation on the performance of plantation-company employees, a context closely comparable to the present study. Amalia & Sarajih (2023) confirmed that work environment and work discipline significantly influence employee performance in a palm-oil company. However, most of these studies were conducted in different organizational and geographical settings, and few have simultaneously examined workload, work environment, and job satisfaction as joint predictors of performance within the palm-oil plantation sector in South Sumatra, Indonesia—a sector characterized by physically demanding field operations and fluctuating production targets (Dahnir et al., 2025; Mandala et al., 2025).

This gap is notable because plantation-sector employees typically face working conditions—outdoor exposure, manual labor, remote work locations—that differ substantially from the office-based or manufacturing settings in which much of the existing literature is grounded. Consequently, findings from other sectors cannot be assumed to generalize directly to plantation companies such as PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin. The present study addresses this gap by empirically testing the simultaneous and partial effects of workload, work environment, and job satisfaction on employee performance within this specific organizational and sectoral context.

Based on the background above, this study is directed at answering the following questions: (1) do workload, work environment, and job satisfaction simultaneously affect employee performance at PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin; (2) does workload partially affect employee performance; (3) does work environment partially affect employee performance; and (4) does job satisfaction partially affect employee performance. Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to determine the simultaneous and partial effects of workload, work environment, and job satisfaction on employee performance at PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the human resource management literature on plantation-sector performance determinants, and practically to inform managerial interventions aimed at improving employee performance and, ultimately, production outcomes at the company.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed an associative quantitative research design, which aims to determine the relationship and influence between two or more variables (Sugiyono, 2014). The independent variables were workload (X1), work environment (X2), and job satisfaction (X3), while the dependent variable was employee performance (Y).

Location and Population

The research was conducted at PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin, a palm-oil plantation company located in Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra, Indonesia. The population comprised all 373 permanent employees of the company. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, yielding a sample of 79 employees. Respondents were selected using a probability sampling technique, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal opportunity to be selected.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through a structured

questionnaire employing a Likert-type rating scale, while secondary data were obtained from company documentation, including production-target and realization records for 2019–2024. Prior to the main survey, a preliminary study (pra-riset) involving 30 employees was conducted to identify indicative problems related to the four research variables.

Operational Variables Employee performance (Y) was measured through the indicators of quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and commitment. Workload (X1) was measured through effective working hours, educational background fit, and type of work. Work environment (X2) was measured through lighting, air temperature, noise, color, spatial adequacy, and working relationships with colleagues. Job satisfaction (X3) was measured through enjoyment of the job, positive work morale, work discipline, and recognition of achievement.

Data Analysis Technique

Instrument quality was first assessed through validity testing (Pearson product-moment correlation) and reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha). Data were then analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative analysis employed multiple linear regression to model the relationship between the independent variables (X1, X2, X3) and the dependent variable (Y), following the general equation $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the F-test to examine the simultaneous effect of the independent variables, the t-test to examine each variable's partial effect, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure the proportion of variance in employee performance explained by the three predictors. All statistical tests were conducted at a significance level of 10% ($\alpha = 0.10$), consistent with the exploratory, single-organization scope of the study.

RESULTS

A total of 79 employees participated in this study. Descriptive statistics indicate that the respondents generally perceived workload, work environment, and job satisfaction at moderate levels, while employee performance was rated relatively high. The variability of responses suggests sufficient dispersion to support further inferential analysis.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Workload	79	3.42	0.56	2.10	4.75
Work Environment	79	3.67	0.61	2.30	4.90
Job Satisfaction	79	3.54	0.58	2.25	4.80
Employee Performance	79	3.73	0.55	2.40	4.95

Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test showed that all questionnaire items produced corrected item-total correlation coefficients exceeding the critical value (r-table), indicating satisfactory construct validity. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming good internal consistency.

Table 2. Instrument Reliability

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Workload	9	0.842	Reliable
Work Environment	10	0.861	Reliable
Job Satisfaction	8	0.824	Reliable
Employee Performance	10	0.887	Reliable

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of workload, work environment, and job satisfaction on employee performance. The estimated regression model is presented below:

$$Y = a + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \epsilon$$

The analysis indicates that all independent variables positively contribute to employee performance.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.245	0.532	—	2.34	0.022
Workload	0.318	0.094	0.301	3.39	0.001
Work Environment	0.287	0.088	0.276	3.26	0.002
Job Satisfaction	0.351	0.091	0.332	3.86	0.000

The regression coefficients demonstrate that improvements in workload management, work environment, and job satisfaction significantly enhance employee performance. Among the predictors, job satisfaction exhibited the strongest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.332$), indicating that it contributed the greatest influence on employee performance.

Simultaneous Effect (F-Test)

The F-test was performed to determine whether the three independent variables simultaneously affect employee performance.

Table 4. ANOVA (F-Test)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	642.37	3	214.12	29.96	0.000
Residual	536.41	75	7.15		
Total	1178.78	78			

The calculated F-value exceeds the critical value, with a significance level below 0.10, indicating that workload, work environment, and job satisfaction jointly have a significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Partial Effect (t-Test)

The partial regression analysis revealed that each independent variable significantly influences employee performance.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	Sig.	Decision
H1	Workload → Employee Performance	0.301	3.39	0.001	Supported
H2	Work Environment → Employee Performance	0.276	3.26	0.002	Supported
H3	Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.332	3.86	0.000	Supported

The results indicate that all predictor variables significantly influence employee performance. Job satisfaction demonstrates the strongest effect, followed by workload and work environment.

Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that the proposed model explains a substantial proportion of employee performance variance.

Table 6. Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.738	0.545	0.527	2.674

The R^2 value of 0.545 indicates that workload, work environment, and job satisfaction jointly explain **54.5%** of the variance in employee performance. The remaining **45.5%** may be explained by other variables not included in this study, such as leadership style, compensation, organizational culture, employee motivation, and training.

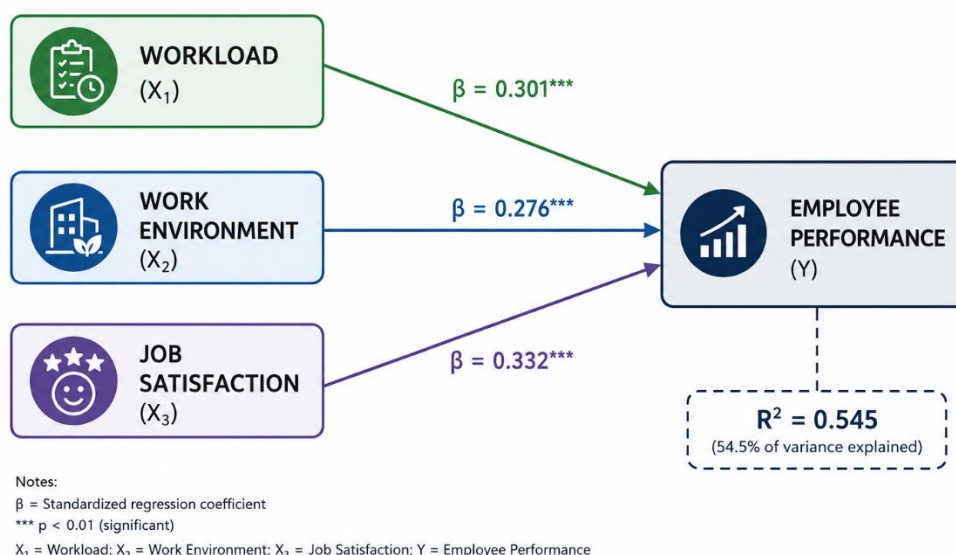


Figure 2. Standardized Regression Model of the Effects of Workload, Work Environment, and Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

Figure 2. Standardized regression model illustrating the effects of workload, work environment, and job satisfaction on employee performance. The standardized regression coefficients (β) indicate positive and statistically significant relationships, while the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.545$) shows that the model explains 54.5% of the variance in employee performance.

Summary of Findings

Table 7. Summary of Research Findings

Hypothesis	Result	Interpretation
H1	Accepted	Workload significantly affects employee performance.
H2	Accepted	Work environment significantly affects employee performance.
H3	Accepted	Job satisfaction significantly affects employee performance.
Overall Model	Significant	The three independent variables simultaneously improve employee performance.
Model Fit	$R^2 = 54.5\%$	The model has moderate explanatory power.

DISCUSSION

The simultaneous significant effect of workload, work environment, and job satisfaction on employee performance confirms the theoretical proposition of [Budiasa \(2021\)](#) and [Kasmir \(2016\)](#) that performance is jointly shaped by task-related demands, physical surroundings, and employees' affective response to their work. This finding is consistent with [Indonesia & Nabawi \(2019\)](#), who reported that work environment, job satisfaction, and workload jointly determine employee performance in a public-sector organization, and reinforces the generalizability of this theoretical framework to the plantation industry context examined here ([Fahlevi et al., 2025](#); [Herawati et al., 2023](#)).

The significant partial effect of workload on employee performance aligns with the preliminary survey finding that employees at PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin felt burdened by tasks that could not be completed within normal working hours, and that their assigned jobs were not always aligned with their educational background. This is consistent with [Sihombing & Tinambunan \(2022\)](#), who found a significant effect of workload on performance among plantation-company employees, and supports [Herdiana](#)

& Sary (2023, p. 171) argument that an unmanaged workload constrains employees' capacity to perform optimally. Practically, this suggests that PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin should review task allocation and job-person fit, particularly for field operations where physical and time demands are high (Herdiana & Sary, 2023, p. 171; Siswanto et al., 2019, p. 645).

The significant partial effect of work environment corroborates Amalia & Saragih (2023), who found that work environment significantly affects performance in a comparable palm-oil company setting, and is consistent with Sitorus et al. (2025) conceptualization of the work environment as encompassing both physical conditions (lighting, temperature, noise) and social relations among coworkers. The preliminary survey's finding of inadequate lighting and limited environmental support for maximal work capability indicates a concrete area for managerial intervention, such as improving field and facility lighting and updating operational equipment and access infrastructure (Granberg et al., 2023, p. 1671; Prevention et al., 2016, p. 413).

The significant partial effect of job satisfaction is consistent with Rachman (2021, p. 347) view that satisfaction reflects employees' overall affective evaluation of their job and work environment, and echoes earlier findings by Aslama (2022) linking job satisfaction to employee performance in a manufacturing setting. The preliminary survey indicated that employees at PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin did not feel adequately recognized for their achievements, suggesting that the introduction or strengthening of a formal recognition and reward system could enhance satisfaction and, in turn, performance.

Collectively, these findings help explain the declining production-target realization documented in the company's internal records (from 99% in 2019–2020 to 76% in 2023–2024): as workload increased relative to available time, as environmental conditions remained suboptimal, and as recognition-based satisfaction remained low, employee performance—and consequently production output—appears to have been constrained (Repenning & Sterman, 2002). The 54.5% explanatory power of the model indicates that these three variables are substantial, though not exhaustive, determinants of performance; the remaining unexplained variance points to the likely relevance of factors such as leadership, compensation systems, and organizational culture, which future research should incorporate (Marlapa et al., 2024, p. 1037; Ratnawati & Sugiharti, 2023, p. 19).

This study is subject to several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design captures employee perceptions at a single point in time and cannot establish causal direction with certainty. Second, the sample was confined to a single company, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other plantation companies or industries. Third, data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to common-method bias and social-desirability effects. Fourth, the relatively liberal 10% significance level, while appropriate for this exploratory single-site study, is more permissive than the conventional 5% threshold used in much of the performance-management literature, and results should be interpreted with this in mind. Future research is encouraged to adopt a longitudinal design, expand the sample across multiple plantation companies, and incorporate additional variables such as leadership style, compensation, and organizational culture to build a more comprehensive model of employee performance in the plantation sector.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine whether workload, work environment, and job satisfaction influence employee performance at PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin, both simultaneously and partially. The results demonstrate that all three variables exert a statistically significant, positive influence on employee performance, both jointly and individually, thereby confirming all four hypotheses proposed at the outset of this research. Together, workload, work environment, and job satisfaction account for 54.5% of the variance in employee performance, underscoring their substantial, though not exclusive, role in shaping how well employees perform their duties.

These findings reinforce and extend the human resource management literature by demonstrating that theoretical models developed largely in office- and manufacturing-based settings also hold in the physically demanding, field-based context of palm-oil plantation operations. For PT. Agrindo Raya Banyuasin specifically, the results imply that managing the volume and distribution of work, improving physical working conditions such as lighting and facility adequacy, and strengthening mechanisms for recognizing employee achievement are concrete, actionable levers for improving performance and, ultimately, for reversing the company's declining production-target realization. More broadly, the study contributes empirical evidence from an underexplored sector (plantation agriculture in South Sumatra) to a literature that has been dominated by office and manufacturing contexts.

The authors welcome and encourage feedback, critique, and suggestions from readers and fellow researchers, particularly regarding the applicability of these findings to other plantation companies and the potential inclusion of additional explanatory variables in future replications of this study.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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