

A Moderated Mediation Model of Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, Reward and Job Performance of Auxiliary Police Officers

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ABSTRACT

Job performance refers to an individual's level of achievement within an organization, resulting in outcomes that benefit the organization. However, disciplinary problems and poor performance among employees are increasingly prevalent today, regardless of whether they are in the civil service or the private sector. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the influence of job stress on the job performance of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian banks. This study also aims to examine the moderating effect of reward and the mediating effect of job satisfaction. This study employs a quantitative method focusing on the auxiliary police officers in Malaysian banks. A total of 250 auxiliary police officers were purposively selected as respondents in this study. The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS version 29. The findings reveal that job stress and job satisfaction significantly influence job performance. The result also indicates that rewards significantly moderate the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. The finding further demonstrates that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between job stress and job performance. This study suggests the importance of organizational support for employees' needs and welfare, especially in efforts to build harmonious employment relationships. In this regard, employers need to be sensitive to employee needs, including conducive physical facilities, rewards, awards and recognition, efficient human resource practices and policies, efficient task distribution and strong relationships and communication.

Keywords: Job Stress; Reward; Job Satisfaction; Job Performance; Moderated Mediation

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INTRODUCTION

Job performance is an important criterion for determining an organization's success (Motowidlo & Kell, 2003) and it can be evaluated and influenced by various factors such as leadership, motivation, organizational justice and job involvement. In addition, the success of job performance depends on an employee's competence, professionalism and commitment to their role (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). Job performance can also be measured by a person's ability to perform tasks, effective time management, achievement of expected results and a willingness to improve their ability to perform tasks for an organization (López-Cabarcos et al., 2022). However, job performance will decrease if employees experience high levels of stress due to a lack of interest in their work, low motivation, intolerance, or frequent sick leave (Beauchamp & Jetelina, 2022; Dodanwala et al., 2022; Naqshbandi et al., 2024). Furthermore, the trend of globalization has introduced a new phenomenon where employees face increased work pressure and fluctuating motivation. This situation, if left unchecked, will harm the organization and its employees (Bonner & Brimhall, 2022).

Low salaries and high work pressure are also contributing to integrity issues. Salary rates are often the main factor influencing employees to get involved in corruption (New Straits Times, 2024). The Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC) revealed that enforcement officers under economic pressure and excessive workloads may see corruption as a shortcut to meeting their personal needs (Vethasalam, 2025). A report by Focus Malaysia in 2022, more than 50% of workers reported experiencing severe mental and emotional stress at work (Abdul Rahman, 2025). This includes symptoms such as emotional exhaustion, anxiety, depression and chronic work fatigue. Furthermore, the Wellness at Work Report 2024 by Employment Hero revealed that 67% of workers in Malaysia experienced work fatigue symptoms, up from 58% the previous year (HR Hub, 2024). Vulnerable groups, including women, young workers (18-30 years), junior staff and those with shorter tenure, are particularly affected (Employment Hero, 2024). More worryingly, the same report found that 55% admitted that their work-life balance was at a "fair" or "poor" level. Dodanwala and Santoso (2022) found that personnel who experience stress and emotional problems tend to make mistakes and inaccurate judgments that can lead to failure in organizational missions.

Previous studies have shown that the effects of internal stress can lead to various other negative problems, such as depression, mental stress, impaired sleep quality and health problems (Ahmad, 2022; Chowhan & Pike, 2023). This evidence supports the idea that organizational stress can adversely affect job satisfaction, including high turnover rates, absenteeism, morale problems, reduced productivity and early retirement (Baker et al., 2023; Bonner & Brimhall, 2022). To overcome this problem, rewarding employees is one consideration, as it can influence employee motivation and, in turn, increase organizational productivity (Alimawi & Laili Muda, 2022). Karayanni and Nelken (2022) explained that people tend to be casual about tackling tasks in an organization. However, once they receive internal and external rewards such as wage increases, praise and other forms of appreciation, the situation changes immediately. They will show a high level of job satisfaction with their job and organization. On the other hand, those who do not receive rewards will report lower levels of satisfaction.

Moreover, job satisfaction is said to have clear implications for job performance. Alwali and Alwali (2022) see job satisfaction as an employee's emotional state toward the rewards they receive for the hard work they put into their job. The rewards given do not matter whether they are financial or non-financial. Chowhan and Pike (2023) and Hwang and Park (2022) have

listed several effects of job satisfaction. First, happy employees will produce more productive work. Second, job satisfaction is negatively correlated with absenteeism. Employees with high job satisfaction will have better attendance than those with low job satisfaction (Katebi et al., 2022). Third, job satisfaction is also negatively correlated with job turnover. Employees who are satisfied with their careers and workplaces are less likely to switch or look for another job (Aung et al., 2023; Hartika et al., 2023). The effects of this job satisfaction are indirectly reflected in job performance.

Although many studies examine the relationships among work stress, the importance of rewards and job satisfaction and job performance, previous studies have focused more on public- or private-sector workers in general. Studies conducted on security forces, such as auxiliary police, are scarce. The study is also carried out on police officers and soldiers, which leads to the importance and welfare of auxiliary police being seen as an unimportant field of work, even though they are essential to maintaining ethics and peace. The establishment of the Auxiliary Police is in accordance with Part IX, Police Act 1967 (Section 47 – Section 50) and the Police (Auxiliary Police) Regulations 1970 (P.U.(A) 461 dated 21 December 1970), where the conditions for the establishment of the Auxiliary Police have been clearly stated and not under any other law, namely carrying out police duties only and the safety aspects of the public and designated areas are given priority (Malaysia Auxiliary Police Association, 2019).

The permitted duties are patrolling and controlling the public, checking people and vehicles, protecting and escorting the employer's property, preventing criminal offenses and detecting and arresting offenders. They can also experience stress due to excessive workload (Baker et al., 2023). Workload has become a significant focus in law enforcement, as officers face a variety of tasks, including patrolling and administrative duties such as completing reports and managing cases (Bonner & Brimhall, 2022). The challenges faced by auxiliary police officers in bearing their workload and responsibilities include limited resources, psychological stress and personal safety risks. Additionally, there is a lack of studies examining the proposed relationship from the banking sector's perspective. Furthermore, the researchers found that previous studies were more focused on examining the direct relationships between variables and complex models, such as the influence of moderating and mediating variables, were rarely examined. Therefore, this study introduces reward as a moderating variable and job satisfaction as a mediating variable. This study aims to fill gaps in prior research by introducing the latest and most relevant empirical evidence for the literature review in human resource management. Thus, based on the above discussion, this study also explores the following questions:

1. Do job stress and job satisfaction significantly affect the job performance of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian Banks?
2. Does reward moderate the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian Banks?
3. Does job satisfaction mediate the relationship between job stress and job performance of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian Banks?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Herzberg's Hygiene-Motivation Theory in Determining Job Performance

Frederick Herzberg's Hygiene-Motivation Theory, also known as the Two-Factor Theory, is one of the most influential theories in the field of organizational behavior and management.

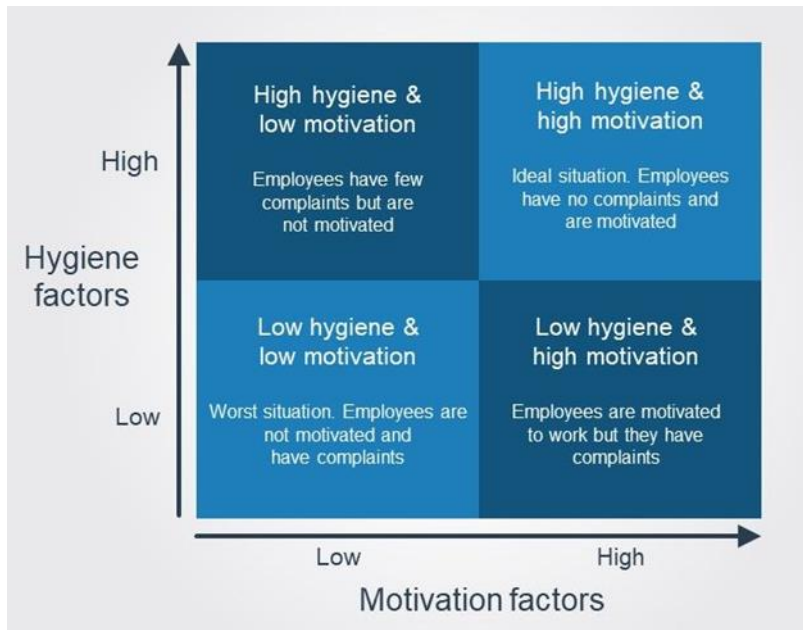
Frederick Herzberg (1959) was a famous psychologist and management theorist, born in 1923 and died in 2000. His Two-Factor Theory revolutionized the way companies understood employee motivation in the workplace. The theory suggests that there are two distinct sets of factors that contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction: hygiene factors and motivators (Maidani, 1991). The presence of motivator factors will cause employees to work harder. These motivator factors can be found within the job itself. Examples include job performance, recognition, the nature of the work itself, responsibility and growth opportunities. According to Herzberg, the absence of these motivators will not lead to significant job dissatisfaction, but their presence will yield high levels of employee satisfaction (Bhatt et al., 2022). Work should give employees a sense of accomplishment (Alimawi & Laili Muda, 2022). This will give them a sense of pride in having accomplished something challenging but rewarding. Next, work should provide employees with praise and recognition for their success (Karayanni & Nelken, 2022). This recognition should come from their superiors or coworkers. The work itself should be interesting, varied and sufficiently challenging to keep employees motivated (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Employees should "own" their work. They should hold themselves accountable for their completion and promotion opportunities should exist for employees. Jobs should also provide employees with opportunities to learn new skills (Venketsamy & Lew, 2024). This can occur either on the job or through more formal training.

The absence of hygiene factors will cause employees to work less hard. The absence of hygiene factors will also lead to employee dissatisfaction (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). Examples of hygiene factors include company policies, supervision, salary, working conditions, workplace safety and health, relationships with colleagues, the physical workplace and relationships between superiors and subordinates. However, hygiene factors have little impact on employee job satisfaction (Hur, 2018). Hygiene factors are not inherent to the job itself but rather to the work environment. For example, the company must be fair and transparent to all employees. They must also be treated equally with their competitors. Then, supervision must be fair and appropriate. Employees must be given autonomy within a reasonable scope. Healthy, friendly and appropriate relationships must exist between coworkers, superiors and subordinates (Maidani, 1991). Moreover, equipment and the work environment must be safe, fit for purpose and hygienic. The pay structure must be fair and reasonable. Salaries and wages must also be competitive with those of other organizations in the same industry. In addition, it is important for employees to feel that their jobs are secure and that they are not under threat of layoff (Hur, 2018).

As shown in Figure 1, in general, there are four different combinations in the workplace:

- High Hygiene and High Motivation – Employees are highly motivated and have few complaints.
- High Hygiene and Low Motivation – Employees have few complaints, but they are not truly motivated; they see their job simply as a place to receive a paycheck.
- Low Hygiene and High Motivation – Employees are motivated, their work is challenging, but they have complaints about pay or working conditions.
- Low Hygiene and Low Motivation – This is the worst possible situation; employees are unmotivated and have many complaints.

Figure 1
The Two-Factor Theory in Practice



This study uses Herzberg's two-factor theory, which distinguishes between hygiene and motivational factors in the work performance of auxiliary police officers in banks. In the context of this study, work stress highlights the weakness of the hygiene factor, as excessive workload and unbalanced work distribution can lead to poor work performance among auxiliary police officers. Rewards are seen as hygiene factors and motivators: financial rewards, such as wages and bonuses, are hygiene factors, while appreciation rewards, such as letters of commendation or certificates of excellence, are motivators. This study suggests that rewards can reduce the impact of work stress on job satisfaction. For example, the higher the reward, the lower the impact of work stress and work performance. With this, rewards are seen as an enabler that fosters the presence of positive stress, called eustress. It can increase resilience and motivate someone to achieve the desired target. Next, this study introduces job satisfaction as a mediating variable, a motivational factor. This emphasizes the importance of creating a work environment that supports and enhances motivation, enabling optimal performance.

An Overview of Job Stress, Job Satisfaction and Job Performance

Job stress is a situation in which individuals experience pressure or tension in their work environment, leading them to respond negatively and feel burdened when completing their obligations (Lambert et al., 2022). Thus, stress can decrease employee performance and productivity (Bonner & Brimhall, 2022). Meanwhile, according to Beauchamp and Jetelina (2022), job stress is an emotional condition that arises from a mismatch between the workload and the individual's ability to manage it. In other words, when the workload is too heavy for a person's physical and psychological abilities, they will experience work stress (Baker et al., 2023). Furthermore, Nasrul et al. (2023) revealed that job stress is a condition of tension that creates a physical and psychological imbalance, affecting an employee's emotions, thought processes and overall condition. When a person experiences stress, they can be physically and psychologically exhausted (Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022). Thus, stress can cause mixed

disorders that are quite chronic when experienced by a person (Beauchamp & Jetelina, 2022). Selye (1956) identified four types of stress. First is eustress or good stress. Stress is a stimulus and source of excitement, so it has beneficial effects on the individual who experiences it. For example, challenges that arise from increased responsibilities, time pressure and high-quality tasks. Second is distressed. Stress can have harmful effects on the individual who experiences it, such as unpleasant or excessive demands that drain the individual's energy, making it easier to fall ill. Third is hyper stress, where stress has an extraordinary impact on those who experience it.

Job satisfaction is an emotional state that is pleasant or unpleasant for employees, related to the appreciation received, the work situation and cooperation between management and employees (Hartika et al., 2023; Hwang & Park, 2022). Job satisfaction reflects the alignment between a person's expectations and the rewards provided by the job; it is also closely related to the theory of justice, psychological agreement and motivation (Alwali & Alwali, 2022; Katebi et al., 2022). According to Aung et al. (2023), Chowhan and Pike (2023) and Matagi et al. (2022), several aspects of job satisfaction have been identified. These include 1) psychological aspects, related to the psyche of employees include interest, work order, attitude towards work, talents and skills, 2) physical aspects, related to the physical conditions of the work environment and the physical condition of the employees, covering the type of work, work time arrangements, rest time arrangements, room conditions, air temperature, lighting, air exchange, employee health conditions and age, 3) social aspect, related to social interaction, both between fellow employees and superiors and between employees with different types of work as well as relationships with family members and 4) financial aspect, related to the guarantee and well-being of employees, which includes the system and amount of salary, social security, allowances, facilities and promotions.

Job performance refers to the results achieved by an employee in carrying out assigned tasks, measured against criteria set by the organization (Hogan & Shelton, 1998). Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) define performance as the result achieved, while Campbell et al. (1990) emphasize that job performance is the result obtained against the standards or criteria that apply to the task in question. Job performance not only includes the quantity or volume of work, but also the quality of work, innovations produced and punctuality in completing tasks. Thus, job performance is one of the main indicators of employee effectiveness in contributing to organizational goals (Naqshbandi et al., 2024). Factors that affect work performance can be divided into two categories: internal factors arising from the employee and external factors arising from the work environment (Campbell et al., 1990; Naqshbandi et al., 2024). For internal factors, employees with a high IQ, adequate education and skills will more easily achieve optimal work performance. Work motivation is one of the main internal drivers of work performance. Herzberg (1959) stated that intrinsic motivation (personal satisfaction) and extrinsic motivation (reward or appreciation) influence employee behaviour at work. Employees' positive attitude towards work will affect morale and work results. This attitude is often influenced by relationships among employees and superiors, co-workers and the work environment (Hogan & Shelton, 1998).

External factors, such as physical condition, lighting, noise and workspace comfort, can affect employee performance. Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) mention that poor physical conditions can reduce employee focus and productivity. Then, a fair and competitive compensation system, including salaries, bonuses and allowances, will increase employee motivation. Triansyah et al. (2023) underlined that the right incentives would encourage employees to work harder to achieve organizational targets.

The Influence of Job Stress on Job Performance

Many workers in Malaysia often face high workloads, long working hours and high expectations (Employment Hero, 2024). This situation, coupled with economic pressures, can lead to extreme fatigue, reduced motivation and an increased risk of errors (Chowhan & Pike, 2023). In addition to affecting productivity, this extreme fatigue also contributes to high employee turnover, which, in turn, affects overall morale. Dodanwala et al. (2022) define stress as an individual's response to demands, whether internal (physiological) or external (physical and social). The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines job stress as a response to physical and emotional hazards that arise when work demands exceed an employee's abilities, knowledge and needs. Depending on the individual and the steps taken to overcome stress, stress can have a positive or negative effect. Among the positive effects of stress is that it can provide enthusiasm and motivation to face life's challenges, whether in everyday life or at work (Lambert et al., 2022). However, the adverse effects of stress can prevent a person from being more productive and cause problems in daily life (Nasrul et al., 2023). In more severe cases, a person may find it difficult to concentrate, lack self-confidence and lose judgment to the point of hurting others (Beauchamp & Jetelina, 2022). Stress can also have long-term effects on workers' physical health (Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022). Bonner and Brimhall (2022) state that work stress is a negative characteristic of the work environment and a psychological response to a dangerous and threatening environment. Baker et al. (2023) found that a stressed worker is unhealthy, low-motivated, less productive and prone to workplace accidents. Continuous exposure to work stress will lead to severe psychological problems. According to Ahmad (2022), high work stress leads to a desire to quit and to misconduct. Based on the discussion, the following hypothesis is posited:

H1: Job stress significantly affects the job performance of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian banks.

The Influence of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction

From a psychological perspective, stress can lead to dissatisfaction. Stress can also appear in other psychological conditions, such as tension, anxiety, irritability, boredom and procrastination (Alamdarloo & Mohsenifar, 2023). It is well established that when people are placed in a job with multiple demands and conflicts, or in a situation where there is no clarity about the duties, authority and responsibilities of the job holder, stress and job dissatisfaction increase (Pozas et al., 2023). The less control people have over the pace of their work, the greater the stress and dissatisfaction. Although more research is needed to clarify the relationship, evidence suggests that jobs that provide low levels of diversity, important values, autonomy, feedback and identity to job stakeholders will create stress and reduce job satisfaction and involvement (Dodanwala et al., 2023). Behavioral symptoms due to stress include changes in productivity, absenteeism, employee turnover, eating habits, increased smoking, fast talking, restlessness and sleep disorders (Adamopoulos & Syrou, 2022). Employees who do not achieve job satisfaction will never attain psychological maturity and, in turn, will become frustrated. Employees like this will often daydream, have low work morale, tire easily and get bored; their emotions are unstable, often absent and they do busywork that has nothing to do with the work to be done (Mawardi, 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Job stress significantly affects the job satisfaction of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian banks.

The Influence of Job Satisfaction on Job Performance

Job satisfaction is said to have clear implications for job performance. Katebi et al. (2022) stated that job satisfaction has an impact not only on employees but also on employers and society. Alwali and Alwali (2022) and Aung et al. (2023) have listed several effects on job satisfaction. First, happy employees will produce more productive work. Second, job satisfaction is negatively correlated with absenteeism. Employees with high job satisfaction will have better attendance than those with low job satisfaction. Third, job satisfaction is also negatively correlated with job turnover (Hwang & Park, 2022). Employees who are satisfied with their careers and workplaces will be less likely to feel the need to switch or look for another job. The effects of job satisfaction are indirectly reflected in job performance. There is a negative relationship between satisfaction and absenteeism (Matagi et al., 2022). Dissatisfied employees are more likely to be absent from work. Although a high level of job satisfaction does not guarantee a low level of absenteeism, because absenteeism can be moderated by other factors, such as the importance of work for employees, the opportunity to use various skills in work where there is a clear purpose and the existence of good relationships with superiors and peers (Chowhan & Pike, 2023). Job satisfaction is a possible predictor of intention to leave. The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover is stronger than between satisfaction and absenteeism. Managers can predict who is likely to leave by periodically assessing employees' job satisfaction (Hartika et al., 2023). Consequently, the following hypothesis is projected:

H3: Job satisfaction significantly affects the job performance of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian banks.

Moderating Effect of Reward

Rewards are financial or non-financial gifts to employees for their contributions of expertise and energy to the organization (Alimawi & Laili Muda, 2022; Chi et al., 2023). Karayanni and Nelken (2022) stated that employees will respond positively to the organization when they are cared for. Thus, employees will be more committed and give their full attention to helping the organization increase productivity and profits. Venketsamy and Lew (2024) stated that intrinsic rewards are rewards that are not in the form of cash or do not have a physical form. Examples of intrinsic rewards are employee recognition, professional growth, authority for immediate tasks, respect and appreciation. Nurlina (2022) also stated that these intrinsic rewards will come naturally when an employee performs his or her duties well and obtains satisfaction with the results of the work assigned to the organization. Extrinsic rewards are related to the job itself. It consists of elements such as salary, fringe benefits, job security, promotions, private office space and social climate (Abdelwahed et al., 2023). This definition of extrinsic rewards is further strengthened by Chi et al. (2023), who stated that extrinsic rewards are external stimuli provided by managers that can serve as incentives for employees to increase productivity (Tarigan et al., 2022). For employees, salary is an important factor in fulfilling their personal and family needs. In addition to fulfilling each employee's basic needs, salary also motivates them to work with enthusiasm. Salary dissatisfaction arises when employees feel they do not receive an appropriate amount (Abdelwahed et al., 2023). A reasonable salary will satisfy the employees, increase their commitment and boost productivity. Recognition is a powerful motivational tool, even surpassing the satisfaction that arises from providing compensation

(Chi et al., 2023). Recognition can be given by superiors, management, customers, professionals, or colleagues. Therefore, someone who receives recognition can increase morale in the workplace. Consequently, the following hypothesis is posited:

H4: Reward significantly moderates the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian banks.

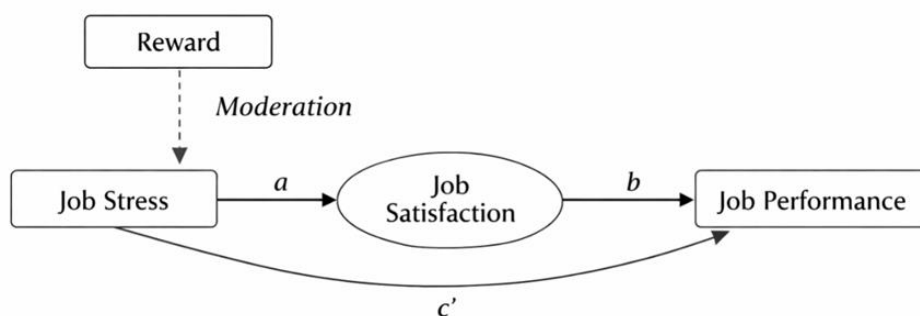
Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction

Employees are an important asset to an organization in achieving its goals and conducting its activities. Without employees, an organization cannot operate effectively and smoothly (Matagi et al., 2022). Without productive employees, an organization will fail to function as desired (Tarigan et al., 2022). Many factors can cause employees to be unproductive at work, among them is a lack of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an individual's reaction to their work experience (Katebi et al., 2022). According to Hartika et al. (2023), job satisfaction is a positive behaviour or emotional state resulting from an evaluation of one's work experience. Studies to assess job satisfaction are necessary to measure both human values and financial benefits (Aung et al., 2023). As early as 1918, Edward Thorndike revealed the link between work and job satisfaction in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Employees who have high levels of job satisfaction usually show the following characteristics: 1) believing that the organization will continue to succeed, 2) concern for the quality of work being carried out/tried, 3) feeling responsible for the success/failure of the organization, 4) having a high level of loyalty to the organization and 5) more efficient, effective and productive (Alwali & Alwali, 2022; Chowhan & Pike, 2023; Matagi et al., 2022). When job satisfaction exists, it encourages employees to be more motivated, improve performance and increase productivity and at the same time can prevent adverse outcomes such as laziness, absenteeism, early termination, crime and others (Hwang & Park, 2022). Factors that affect job satisfaction need to be taken seriously and become a focus for an organization's management or human resources. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between job stress and job performance of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian banks.

Based on the hypothesis that the researchers have formulated, this research model can be described as follows:

Figure 2
Research Model



METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is carried out through a survey, in which the researchers administer a questionnaire to the target respondents. The population in this study comprises auxiliary police officers working at Malaysian banks in the Klang Valley. The exact number of auxiliary police officers in Malaysian banks cannot be determined due to the lack of official data and a comprehensive database of the total number serving in the banking sector in Malaysia. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis requires a sample of at least 5-10 times the number of indicator variables used in the research. A good sample size for the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (ML) technique ranges from 100 to 200 (Casella & Berger, 2002). Thus, the total number of respondents is 250. The sampling technique is purposive sampling. The purposive sampling technique was chosen because this study focused on auxiliary police who met the following criteria: 20 to 50 years old, Malaysian citizens and with more than 3 years of work experience. This was to ensure that the respondents were suitable for selection and that they would meet the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was adapted from studies by Cooper et al. (1988) on job stress, Spector (1997) on job satisfaction, Malhotra et al. (2007) and Kuvaas (2006) on rewards and Rotundo and Sackett (2002) on job performance. This instrument uses a Likert scale measurement with 1 to 5 points.

Inferential statistics used multivariate analysis of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). This technique combines the ability to perform several statistical analyses, such as Factor Analysis, Multiple Regression and Path Analysis, simultaneously. The data was analyzed for reliability, validity, correlations and descriptive findings using SEM, AMOS and SPSS. To investigate the moderating effect, the interaction analysis examined whether rewards strengthen or weaken the association between job stress and job satisfaction. The significance of the interaction term was evaluated based on regression estimates and *p*-values attained from SEM analysis. To assess the mediation effect, the indirect effect was estimated using the bootstrapping procedure in AMOS. The estimation procedure based on Baron and Kenny's (1986) guidelines, also known as the causal steps, was used. The steps in testing the hypothesis, referring to the procedure for testing the role of mediator proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), are as follows:

- Create a regression equation of job stress (X) against job performance (Y). This regression analysis will produce path c, which is expected to be significant and is called the total effect.
- Create a regression equation of job stress (X) against job satisfaction (M). This regression analysis will produce path a that is expected to be significant.
- Make a regression equation of job stress (X) and job satisfaction (M) against job performance (Y). This regression analysis will produce two predictor estimates from M and X. Our prediction of M on Y produces path b. In contrast, the prediction of X against Y produces path c'. Path b is expected to be significant, while path c' is expected to be insignificant for complete mediation to occur, or path c' is significant but has a decreased effect size for partial mediation to occur. This line $a*b$ is called an indirect effect, while line c' is called a direct effect. If none of the four paths meet the criteria, the researcher cannot claim the existence of a mediation effect.

A pilot study was conducted to determine the feasibility of the planned study. The pilot study included 30 respondents. Instrument validity comprises face validity, content validity and construct validity. Face and content validity were reviewed and confirmed by two experts. In contrast, construct validity analysis (factor analysis) and item reliability analysis were conducted using statistical tests in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The

aspects evaluated are content, language accuracy and the level of difficulty and suitability of the content for each construct.

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the items in the study to classify them according to a specified factor structure (Hair et al., 2010), while reliability analysis was conducted for each variable to determine the instrument's reliability using Cronbach's alpha values—factor analysis of the instrument pilot study data using the Principal Component Method and Varimax Rotation Technique. The results of the Bartlett Test of Sphericity indicate a correlation between variables (constructs), with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) and a KMO Index of 0.950 (approaching 1). The Total Variance Explained showed that all factors have eigenvalues > 1 .

Factor loadings also indicate that the items are appropriate and align with the correct construct. Table 1 presents the measurement items for the study and the Cronbach's alpha values for each variable. Reliability analysis was conducted on all items within each construct to assess item reliability using the principles of stability, equivalence and internal consistency (Cohen, 1988). An alpha value of 0.60 is considered low and not acceptable, while one between 0.60 and 0.80 is acceptable (Sekaran, 1992). As shown in Table 1, the constructs used in this study are reliable and acceptable.

Table 1
Measurement of Variables and Reliability Test Results

Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Stress	1. I have too much work to do in too little time.	0.673
	2. I am unclear about what my supervisor expects of me.	
	3. There is friction or anger among colleagues.	
	4. I often feel my job interferes with my family life.	
Reward	1. I feel motivated to perform better when I receive monetary rewards for my work.	0.870
	2. My performance improves when there is a financial incentive.	
	3. Salary and bonuses reflect the effort I put into my job.	
	4. I feel encouraged when my supervisor recognizes my efforts.	
	5. Public recognition of my achievements motivates me to perform better.	
	6. I value appreciation and positive feedback for the work I do.	
Job Satisfaction	1. I am satisfied with my job.	0.855
	2. I enjoy the work that I do.	
	3. I feel proud to work for this organization.	
	4. I am satisfied with the support I receive from my supervisor and colleagues.	
Job Performance	5. My skills and efforts are fully utilized in this job.	0.788
	1. Overall, I perform my job well.	
	2. I am a top performer compared with others in similar positions.	
	3. My supervisor would rate my performance as excellent.	

FINDINGS

Demographic Profiles

The response rate in this study was 94.8%, with 237 of 250 distributed questionnaires collected and analyzed. According to the research methodology literature, a response rate above 60 percent is considered adequate, while a rate above 70 percent is considered suitable for social and organizational survey studies (Fowler, 2014). As shown in Table 2, out of 237 respondents, most are male (n = 160, 67.5%) and the rest are female (n = 77, 32.5%). Next, for the age group, the highest number of respondents is 32 years old and above (n=65,27.4%). This is followed by individuals aged 26-28 years (n=64, 27.0%), 29-31 years old (n=60, 25.3%), 20-22 years (n=25, 10.5%) and 23-25 years (n=23, 9.7%). Regarding religion, the majority are Muslim (n=158, 66.7%), followed by Buddhists (n=29, 12.2%), Christianity (n=26, 11.0%) and Hindus (n=24, 10.1%). Finally, regarding years of service, most respondents have served for 5-10 years (n = 119, 50.2%), followed by 11-20 years (n=76, 32.1%), 3-5 years (n=30, 12.7%) and more than 20 years (n=12, 5.1%).

Table 2
Demographic Profiles

Profile		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	160	67.5
	Female	77	32.5
Age Group	20-22 years old	25	10.5
	23-25 years old	23	9.7
	26-28 years old	64	27.0
	29-31 years old	60	25.3
	32 years old and above	65	27.4
Religion	Islam	158	66.7
	Christianity	26	11.0
	Buddhism	29	12.2
	Hinduism	24	10.1
Year of Service	Less 3-5	30	12.7
	5-10	119	50.2
	11-20	76	32.1
	More 20	12	5.1

Assessment of Validity and Reliability of Constructs

Convergent validity refers to a set of indicators that are considered as a yardstick in assessing a construct. To achieve this, the average variance extracted (AVE) value for each construct must be at least 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Two measures often used to assess this reliability are Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). Cronbach's alpha estimates reliability based on the intercorrelation among indicators when all indicators have equivalent outer loadings on the variables they represent. On the other hand, the CR value provides an estimate of reliability without assuming equivalence in the indicator loadings across the variables (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, the CR value is more often reported in studies using the SEM method (Hair et al., 2010). According to Hair et al. (2010), CR is interpreted using the same general rule: values of 0.60-0.70 are considered acceptable and values of 0.70 or higher are considered

satisfactory. The AVE and CR values generated are presented in Table 3. All values showed that the variables used in the study are valid and reliable for further structural analysis.

Table 3
Items Loading, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for All Constructs

Variable	Items	Loadings	AVE >0.50	CR >0.70
Job Stress	S1	0.775	0.560	0.840
	S2	0.734		
	S3	0.760		
	S4	0.724		
Reward	R1	0.790	0.560	0.860
	R2	0.708		
	R3	0.725		
	R4	0.734		
	R5	0.780		
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.714	0.552	0.861
	JS2	0.725		
	JS3	0.747		
	JS4	0.750		
	JS5	0.776		
Job Performance	JP1	0.810	0.684	0.867
	JP2	0.827		
	JP3	0.843		

Discriminant validity can be tested by examining cross-loadings. The correlation between an indicator and its construct must be greater than the correlation between the indicator and other constructs. Another method for assessing discriminant validity is to compare the square root of each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with the correlation between the construct and other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 4, the results of the discriminant validity test show that all constructs have a square root value of AVE above the correlation value with other latent constructs through the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Table 4
Discriminant Validity Results

No.	Variable	1	2	3	4
1	Job Stress	0.750			
2	Reward	-0.116**	0.750		
3	Job Satisfaction	-0.148**	0.480**	0.743	
4	Job Performance	-0.230**	0.645**	0.509**	0.827

Note: Values in the diagonal show the square root of AVE

Measurement Model Assessment

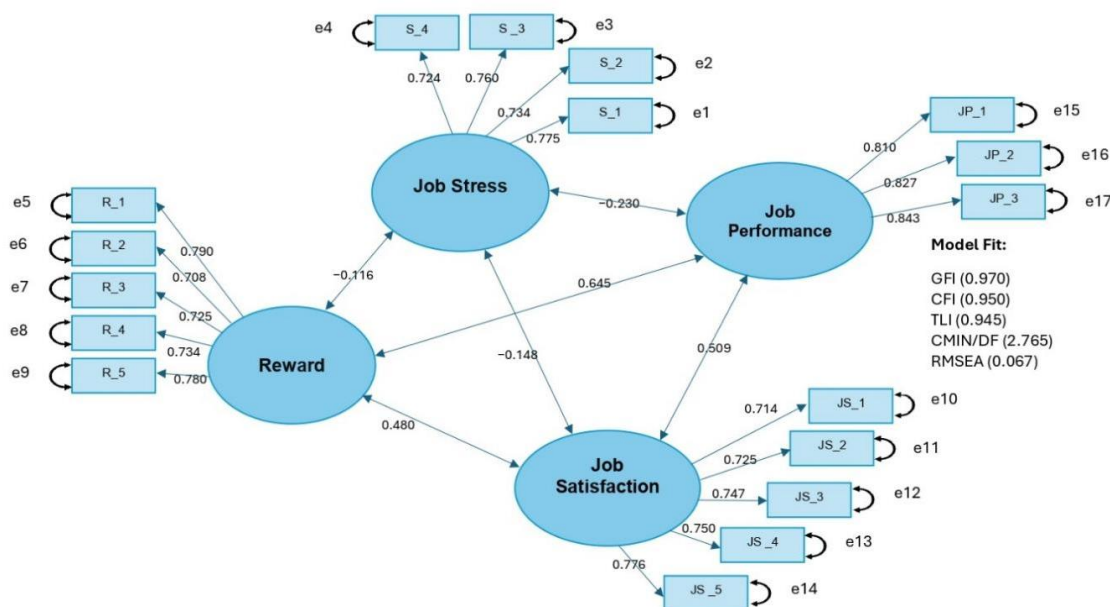
The Goodness-of-fit (GOF) measure is used in both structural and measurement models to assess model fit. Researchers have developed GOF as a measure of the model's ability to present data. Therefore, various measures have been developed, each with its own

characteristics. Hair (2010) suggests using three fit indices to prove good model fit. To evaluate the model's fit, the fit index must be achieved. Model fit testing is done by looking at the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) (≥ 0.90), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (≥ 0.90) and Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) (≥ 0.90), Chi-Square Minimum Discrepancy divided by Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/DF) (≤ 3.0) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (≤ 0.08) values. The scholar citations for the indicators are as follows:

- Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = Jöreskog and Sörbom (1984).
- Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = Hu and Bentler (1999).
- Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) (≥ 0.90) = Tucker and Lewis (1973).
- Chi-Square Minimum Discrepancy divided by Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/DF) = Marsh and Hocevar (1985).
- Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (≤ 0.08) = Browne and Cudeck (1993).

The results of the model testing indicate that the proposed model is a good fit, with GFI (0.970), CFI (0.950), TLI (0.945), CMIN/DF (2.765) and RMSEA (0.067). Meanwhile, to evaluate the factor loadings, note that all factor loadings must be greater than 0.50 (Byrne, 2010). Any indicator that does not meet the requirements must be discarded. As shown in Figure 3, the items' loadings are above 0.50, indicating good validity.

Figure 3
Measurement Model



Structural Model Assessment

The results of the model testing indicate that the structural model is a good fit, with GFI (0.950), CFI (0.930), TLI (0.920), CMIN/DF (3.876) and RMSEA (0.075). The moderating variable acts as an "intermediary" that determines how large the effect of X on Y depends on other factors; this study proposed reward as the moderating variable. Based on the results in Table 5, job stress ($\beta = -0.257, p < 0.001$) and reward ($\beta = 0.390, p < 0.001$) were significantly affected

by job satisfaction. -0.257 is the value of the slope of the regression line, which shows that for every change in job stress of 1%, there is a corresponding change and reduction in job satisfaction of 0.257 units. On the other hand, a 1 percent increase in rewards is associated with a 0.390-unit increase in job satisfaction. Moreover, the study found that reward moderates the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.100, p < 0.001$). Hence, hypothesis 4 is accepted.

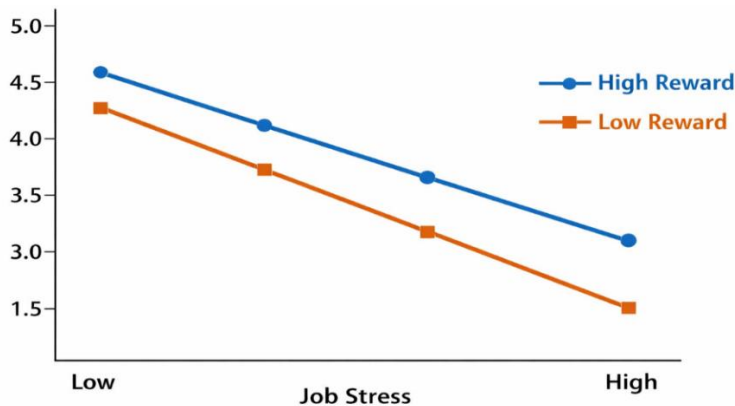
Table 5
Result of the Moderation Analysis

Path	Path Coefficient (β)	S.E	t
DV: Job Satisfaction			
Job Stress	-0.257^{***}	0.067	6.180
Reward	0.390^{***}	0.080	4.290
Moderating Effect	Path Coefficient (β)	S.E	95% CI
Hypothesis 4: Job Stress*Reward	0.100^{***}	0.073	[0.029, 0.380]

*Note: Significance level: $***p < 0.001$*

As shown in Figure 4, high reward can buffer the adverse effect of job stress on job satisfaction. Rewards are highly effective motivators. When employees know that their efforts will be appreciated, they give their best in every task. This feeling of motivation does not necessarily come from big rewards; small, consistent rewards can also boost employee morale.

Figure 4
Moderation Slope Graph



In many social, psychological, management, economic and other studies, the direct relationship between the independent and dependent variables often does not fully explain the mechanism at work. Hence, the inclusion of mediating variables is key to enriching the meaning of research findings. Research that uses mediation analysis can describe processes, not just associations or direct influences. The presence of a mediator variable allows researchers to test both direct and indirect effects within a single framework. In evaluating the mediating effect of job satisfaction, the results show significant direct effects of job stress on job performance ($\beta = -0.288, p < 0.001$) and of job satisfaction on job performance ($\beta = 0.412, p < 0.001$). Thus, hypotheses 1 and 3 are accepted. The results also show significant direct effects of job stress on job

satisfaction ($\beta = -0.257, p < 0.001$). Thus, hypothesis 2 is accepted. The results additionally show a significant indirect effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between job stress and job performance ($\beta = -0.105, p < 0.001$). Thus, hypothesis 5 is accepted. The indirect effect is tested using a two-tailed significance test based on bias-corrected bootstrapping. Hair et al. (2010) state that a mediator effect occurs when the total impact of exogenous variables on endogenous variables exceeds 0.080. The total effect is $-0.393 [-0.288 + (-0.257 \times 0.412)]$.

Table 6
Result of Mediation Analysis

Path	Path Coefficient (β)	S.E	CR
DV: Job Performance			
Hypothesis 1: Job Stress	-0.288***	0.067	4.296
Hypothesis 3: Job Satisfaction	0.412 ***	0.043	3.280
DV: Job Satisfaction			
Hypothesis 2: Job Stress	-0.257***	0.052	1.809
Mediating Effect via Job Satisfaction			
	Path Coefficient (β)	S.E	95% CI
Hypothesis 5: Job Stress \longrightarrow Job Performance	-0.105***	0.072	[0.096, 0.118]
Total Path			
Job Stress + Job Satisfaction \longrightarrow Job Performance	-0.393***	0.069	[0.135, 0.321]

*Note: Significance level: *** $p < 0.001$*

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of job stress on the job performance of auxiliary police officers of Malaysian banks. Second, this study also aims to examine the moderating effect of reward and the mediating effect of job satisfaction. This study is quantitative, focusing on auxiliary police officers in Malaysian banks. A total of 250 auxiliary police officers were purposively selected as respondents in this study. The findings have revealed that job stress and job satisfaction significantly influence job performance. Stress can cause illnesses in the body, characterized by changes in metabolism such as increased blood pressure, headaches, palpitations and even heart disease (Chowhan & Pike, 2023; Dodanwala et al., 2022). This can trigger a vicious cycle of anxiety, anger, frustration and despair. As a result, employees may be unable to perform tasks effectively or make quick decisions without thinking (Beauchamp & Jetelina, 2022; Bonner & Brimhall, 2022). Other impacts include changes in productivity, increased absenteeism and employee turnover (Baker et al., 2023).

Second, the study found that reward significantly moderates the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. Salary increases and bonuses can attract and motivate employees to continue supporting the organization's goals, namely by increasing productivity, improving quality and ensuring ethical and legal compliance (Alimawi & Laili Muda, 2022; Chi et al., 2023). Intrinsic rewards usually come from internal motivation and make work more productive and do not involve any payment, such as flexible working hours, appreciation certificates and others (Karayanni & Nelken, 2022). It is also a form of reward that cannot be seen with the naked eye but can be felt through employees' emotions, improving work performance by fostering a positive environment, caring for employees and implementing job rotation to teach the vision and mission of the organization (Abdelwahed et al., 2023; Nurlina, 2022; Venketsamy & Lew, 2024). Third, the study found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between job stress and job performance. This is consistent with studies conducted by Aung et al. (2023), Hartika et al. (2023) and Katebi et al. (2022). Employee job satisfaction

significantly influences absenteeism. If employee job satisfaction is high, absenteeism rates will continue to decline due to employee enthusiasm (Matagi et al., 2022). Employee turnover is reduced because employees are satisfied and happy with their work and job productivity can increase due to work enthusiasm driven by relatively high employee job satisfaction (Alwali & Alwali, 2022; Chowhan & Pike, 2023).

From a theoretical perspective, this study reveals two important findings. First, both hygiene and motivation can reduce employees' stress. Second, both hygiene and motivation can improve employee performance. Theoretically, two factors or variables in the two-factor theory are crucial. Most previous studies have focused solely on motivator factors such as a sense of respect, a sense of achievement, praise and others. For example, Mitsakis and Galanakis (2022) found that for employees who have worked for a long time in an organization, the hygiene factors are no longer significant concerns, as they no longer care about salary or promotion because they already have them. Young employees new to the world of work care more about their salary, the workplace atmosphere, the work they do and opportunities for promotion. However, this study has shown that hygiene factors, such as suitable and comfortable workplace conditions, good salaries and opportunities for promotion, are important. If the employer does not provide these factors, employees will feel dissatisfied and this can decrease their job performance regardless of their demographic background.

From a research methods perspective, data collected through questionnaires can enhance the validity and reliability of the measurement scale, thereby helping produce accurate and reliable study findings. From the perspective of contributions to practitioners, the findings of this study can serve as a guide for human resource managers to improve human resource development and management programs at the organizational level. First, before employees achieve high performance, they need to understand the company's goals and expectations (Nurlina, 2022). Communicate to employees clearly what is expected and how their contributions can positively impact the overall goals (Amirzan & Noor, 2024). The employer should focus on developing jobs through continuous training and development, which not only improves employees' skills but also motivates them. Workshops and training for managers on empathy, communication and recognizing signs of stress can also help create a supportive workplace environment (Abdelwahed et al., 2023; Azlan & Noor, 2024). Stress management workshops and mindfulness programs equip employees with the skills to manage work-related stress better (Beauchamp & Jetelina, 2022). The program includes mindfulness training, breathing techniques and time management strategies, giving employees the tools to prevent burnout and maintain a healthy mental balance, thereby supporting productivity and job satisfaction (Dodanwala et al., 2022; Lambert et al., 2022; Zakarani & Mohd Noor, 2021).

Good communication relationships between employers and employees are key to effective performance (Kumari et al., 2022). The employer needs to ensure there are open lines of communication and that employees feel comfortable voicing their opinions, suggestions, or concerns. Recognition and bonuses or rewards are effective ways to recognize and reward excellent performance (Alimawi & Iaili Muda, 2022; Chi et al., 2023). This can take the form of public praise, financial rewards, or opportunities for advancement within the organization. The method for determining rewards should consider employees' individual needs (Noor & Nor, 2025). For example, employees who have families, have served for a long time and are high performers need to be given more rewards, such as health care and additional benefits, beyond their basic salary, to recognize their contributions and loyalty to the organization (Abdelwahed et al., 2023). Giving employees flexibility in how they perform their jobs can increase job satisfaction and performance (Alwali & Alwali, 2022). Employees who can adjust

their schedules to suit their personal needs are likely to be more productive and satisfied (Noor & Nordin, 2026). If the above suggestions are given due attention, this will improve positive employee attitudes and behaviours, including satisfaction, commitment, performance and ethical behaviour in the workplace. This can then help achieve the organization's goals and strategies towards greater excellence.

CONCLUSION

Job performance is the result of a person's behaviour in performing work activities. Job performance could be influenced by stress, recognition, responsibility, wages or salaries, working conditions, company policy and administration, interpersonal relationships and others (Alimawi & Laili Muda, 2022; Chi et al., 2023; Chowhan & Pike, 2023; López-Cabarcos et al., 2022). The findings have been sufficient to enable the researchers to formulate several recommendations for the organization to operate more efficiently and effectively. By proactively combating stress and improving job satisfaction through flexible working and a highly supportive organizational culture, employers can create a workplace where employees not only survive but thrive. This commitment is ultimately driving sustainable success in Malaysia's evolving economic landscape. Despite the study's contributions, several limitations in its design may affect the interpretation of the findings. First, a cross-sectional study design was used. Although cross-sectional studies have many advantages, such as a simpler, cheaper design that allows data collection in a short period, they provide limited information about changes that may occur over time. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies use a longitudinal design to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Apart from that, all variables in this study were measured using the same instrument and the data was obtained from a single source: employees. Therefore, variance bias may affect the study's findings. The discussion of the study findings would be more comprehensive if the perception also considered the views of supervisors or leaders in the organization being studied. Therefore, future studies should consider multiple methods and sources to minimize variance bias. Future studies are also recommended to include other factors, such as organizational policies, supervisory style, salary or wage payments, relationships with colleagues, workplace atmosphere, status, security and safety. If these factors are considered and addressed, the researchers can establish a comprehensive model for evaluating job performance.

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