

LITERATURE REVIEW

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# Analysis of the Relationship between Workload and Job Stress in Couriers: A Systematic Literature Review

# Analisis Hubungan antara Beban Kerja dengan Stres Kerja pada Kurir: Systematic Literatur Review

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#### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The rapid growth of e-commerce in Indonesia has increased the demand for delivery services, primarily from online buyers and sellers. This surge elevates couriers' workload, leading to prolonged work hours and unstable conditions (extreme weather exposure, and inconsistent delivery targets), which contribute to stress. Persistent work stress negatively affects productivity, quality of life, and physical and mental health.

**Objectives:** To analyze the relationship between workload and job stress in couriers, and determine the relationship between external and internal factors of work stress in couriers.

**Methods:** This study employed a literature review method, utilizing national and international articles that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected journal articles were from research published in the last five years (2020-2025) and were sourced from databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and ScienceDirect. The data search strategy applied the PICO method (Population, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcomes) using keywords combined with Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to refine or expand the search.

**Results:** The results of data search through the screening stage found a total of seven articles, namely four national articles and three international articles. The results of the search for these seven articles prove that as many as 85.7% indicate a relationship between workload and work stress in couriers.

**Conclusions:** Based on the comparative analysis of the number of articles found and selected, there is a relationship between workload and work stress in couriers. External factors of high work demands with long working hours can cause work stress which can interfere with workers' work.

Keywords: Courier, Mental Health, Workload, Work Stress

#### ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Berkembangnya pertumbuhan e-commerce di Indonesia meningkatkan permintaan jasa pengiriman barang. Survei menunjukkan mayoritas pengguna jasa kurir berasal dari masyarakan yang menjual atau membelibarang secara online. Hal ini berdampak pada peningkatan beban kerja bagi kurir. Beban kerja berat, durasi jam kerja lama, kondisi lingkungan kerja tidak stabilmengakibatkan terjadinya stress pada pekerja. Stress kerja yang dialami berkepanjangan dapat berdampak negatif pada produktivitas, kualitas hidup dan kesehatan fisik maupun kesehatan mental pekerja.

**Tujuan:** Melakukan analisis terhadap hubungan antara beban kerja dengan stres kerja pada kurir, ndan mengetahui hubungan faktor eksternal dan internal stres kerja pada kurir.

**Metode:** Penelitian inimenggunakan metode analisis pustaka atau literatur review. Sumber data berasal dari artikel intrnasional dan nasionalberdasarkankriteria eksklusi dan inklusi yang sudahditetapkan peneliti. Artikel jurnal yang dipilih berasaldari jurnal penelitian terdahulu dengan rentang waktu 5 tahun terakhir (2020-2025). Pencariandata dilakukan melalui database seperti pubmed,googlescholar, sincedirect, dll.Proses pencarian data menggunakan metode PICO (Population, Intervension, Comparison, and Outcomes) dengan menggunakan kata kunci sesuai dengan operator Boolean (AND, OR, NOT) untuk menspesifikasikan atau mengembangkan pencarian.

**Hasil:** Hasil pencarian data melalui tahap screening ditemukan sebanyak 7 artikel yaitu 4 artikel nasional dan 3 artikel international. Hasil yang didapatmembuktikan bahwa sebanyak 85,7% mengindikasikan adanya hubungan antara beban kerja dengan stress kerja pada kurir.

**Kesimpulan:** Berdasarkan dari analisis perbandingan sejumlah artikel yang diperoleh dan diseleksi memiliki hubungan antara beban kerja dengan stress kerja pada kurir. Faktor eksternal tuntutan kerja tingggi, durasi jam kerja panjang dapat menimbulkan stress kerja yang mengganggu pekerjaan.

Kata kunci: Beban kerja, Kesehatan mental, Kurir, Stres kerja

#### INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, work as courier services has experienced a substantial surge along with the increasing demand for shipping services for goods and food. With the increase in the courier and messenger market per year at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13.5% from \$937.46 billion in 2024 to \$1.06 trillion in 2025, according to BPS data by 2023 there will be at least 15.8 thousand warehousing, expedition and courier businesses in Indonesia (STATISTIK, 2024). This trend can be attributed to the expansion of ecommerce and application-based services, which have led to significant increase in delivery operations. The greater number of people who use expedition services has consequently given rise to numerous service provider companies. The majority of logistics services user are consumers who engage in online shopping.

According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), a courier is a person who is dispatched to deliver a crucial item quickly. A courier has several tasks and responsibilities that must be completed, including: a) deliver the goods to the recipient based on the customer's address; b) verify the information and documents provided for the package; c) record the delivery status so that it can be tracked in real-time; d) make sure that the goods arrive at their destination safely, securely, and on time; e) accept payments and Cash On Delivery (COD) transactions; f) keep track of the sender and recipient of the goods; and g) submit reports and data on delivery outcomes to the business; h) adhere to and observe the company's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (Grab Indonesia, 2022). The duties and responsibilities of couriers demonstrate that the role involves a heavy workload. They are required to deliver goods or packages in a short time without knowing the destination address beforehand. A courier must also understand the area of the environment they are working in. In addition, couriers must be physically and mentally strong, because they must face all weather conditions, traffic hazards and they must face the different characters of the recipient of the goods. When an individual is faced with such a high workload, it can lead to various health issues, both physical and mental, one of which is work-related stress.

The pandemic caused a surge in e-commerce in Indonesia in 2020. According to a survey by Populix ('on the Logistic Delivery Services', 2023) conducted in 2023 with 1,577 respondents, 38% of participants reported using courier services 2-3 times per month, while 6% use logistics delivery services 4-6 times a month. This rise in package delivery services has led to employees talking on more work than usual.

The growing demand for logistics services requires service providers to have excellent couriers or human resources to manage operations successfully and efficiently. Work improvement is one of the stages of job evaluation that businesses use to gauge how well workers perform. Assessment of employee performance often triggers job stress. This happens because workers feel the workload demands exceed the individual's adjustment power. The risk associated with working as a package delivery courier is quite high, particularly during the delivery process, where negative events, such as accidents, can happen. Additionally, if an item is damaged, the courier will be responsible for replacing it. Similar to the study conducted by Hong et al. (2022) it was found that 95% of workers with long working hours and high job demands are at risk of experiencing stress.

There were 602,000 cases of depression, anxiety, and stress related to work in the UK in 2019, according to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), with a prevalence rate of 1,800 cases per 100,000 workers. In 2018/19, stress, depression, or anxiety accounted for 44% of all cases of work-related health problems and 54% of all working days lost due to health problems (HSE, 2020). The LFS indicates that in 2019/20, there were 828,000 cases of work-related stress, depression, or anxiety, with a prevalence rate of 2,440 per 100,000 workers. This figure was statistically significantly higher compared to the prior period. In 2019/20, stress, depression, or anxiety represented 51% of all cases of work-related ill health and 55% of all workdays lost due to such conditions. The incidence of work-related stress, depression, and anxiety has risen in recent years. These conditions are more commonly found in public service sectors (Labour Force Survey, 2019).

Workloads that are too high can lead to work stress and have an impact on reducing employee performance. This is emphasized in Government Regulation No. 88/2019 on Occupational Health, which mentions the importance of maintaining the physical and mental health of workers, including controlling psychosocial risks such as work pressure and emotional exhaustion (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Workload is the physical and mental demands felt by workers in order to complete their tasks. Such as under the Job Creation Law (Law No. 11 of 2020) which amended Law No. 13 of 2003. Manpower, employee rights related to working hours, rest time, and health protection are further regulated to ensure the wellbeing of workers. Employee workload is important to note so that it is not excessive which can cause stress and can lead to a decrease in employee performance. Additionally, workers have the right to attain the highest possible standard of health, including mental, physical, and social well-being. Work stress experienced by courier employees should be given greater attention by their supervisors, as the significant work pressure they face can trigger work stress. Big work pressure such as high delivery targets, long working hours, traffic jams, and customer complaints can cause work stress

in couriers. This condition undoubtedly hinders employees' ability to perform their tasks effectively. Consequently, the researchers aim to further investigate whether there is a correlation between workload and work stress in couriers.

## **METHODS**

This research was carried out using the literature review method. The data sources used came from international and national articles selected according to the exclusion and inclusion criteria set by the researchers. The selected journal articles are from previous research journals conducted within the last five years, namely 2020-2025. Journals and research articles were accessed through databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and others. In this research, the data search process was conducted using the PICO method (Population, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcomes), with predefined keywords along with Boolean operators (AND, OR, and NOT) applied to either narrow or broaden the search criteria (Nishikawa-Pacher, 2022).

The keywords used in this study were: 'workload and work stress in couriers' ("hubungan beban kerjadengan stres kerja pada kurir",) 'workload and couriers' ("beban kerja dengan kurir"), and 'work stress and couriers' ("stres kerja dengan kurir"). This study employs data collection methods that adhere to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The PRISMA framework consists of four stages that must be followed: 1) identification: recognizing the journal articles to be included in the metadata; 2) screening: filtering or selecting relevant data; 3) eligibility: assessing the suitability of data sources for inclusion; and 4) inclusion: gathering articles that meet the specific criteria set for the research (Mohamed, Ghazali and Samsudin, 2020). The literature quality analysis method was carried out to minimize the risk of bias from the literature articles and journals used as data sources for this study. There are three stages to select articles, namely screening criteria, assessing the quality of literature, and data extraction.

According to Figure 1, the PRISMA diagram is shown. This study uses a sample of seven previous research articles, consisting of four national articles and three international articles, with a total courier population of 2,995 individuals. The total data for this study amount to (n=141,790), with articles retrieved using Google Scholar (n=135,700), PubMed (n=554), and ScienceDirect (n=5,536).



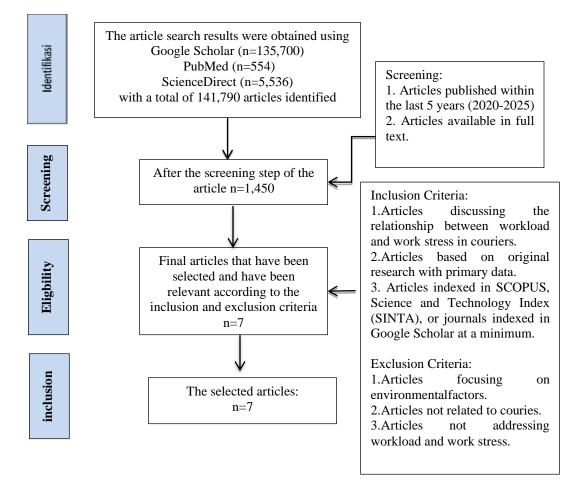


Figure1. Data Search Diagram for Workload and Job Stress in Couriers.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The article search results in this study obtained a total of 141,790 journals. These were then screened based on the publication year (last 5 years) and full-text availability. After applying the inclusion criteria, seven articles were selected. The findings from these seven articles indicate that 85.7% of them report a relationship between workload and work stress in couriers. Based on the articles that were selected, seven articles were identified that align with the topic of discussion and meet the criteria set by the researcher, the results of which are presented in Table 1. The findings from these articles reveal that 85.7% support the existence of a relationship between workload and work stress in couriers. This is because there are six out of seven articles that show no significant relationship between workload and work stress in couriers. So it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between workload and work stress in couriers because this study has a p value of less than 0.05.

| No | Author  | Title Article   | Sample  | Method  | Result  |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | (Santanu<br>and<br>Madhani,<br>2022)                | The Influence of<br>Work Stress and<br>Workload on<br>Employee  | A total of 33<br>couriers J&T<br>Ekspres Garut<br>01                    | Descriptive and<br>associative<br>research with<br>correlation      | This research found that<br>workload p=0.000. With a<br>coefficient of determination<br>(R-squared) value of 0.420,   |
|    |   | Performance in the<br>Courier Division:<br>A Study at J&T<br>Express Garut 01<br>(PT Global Jet<br>Express).  |   | analysis  | this indicates that the variables<br>of work stress and workload<br>influence employee<br>performance by 42%.   |
| 2. | (Hong <i>et al.</i> , 2022)                         | The Influence of<br>Long Working<br>Hours,<br>Occupational<br>Stress, and Well-<br>Being on<br>Depression among<br>Couriers in<br>Zhejiang, China                         | A total of 1.200<br>couriers in<br>Zhejiang, China                      | Cross-sectional<br>study design                                     | There is a positive and<br>significant correlation exists<br>between the length of work<br>duration and job stress p<0.01.<br>More ordinary working hours<br>lead to high levels of job stress.<br>With long working hours. |
| 3  | (Xue <i>et al.</i> , 2023)                          | Associations of<br>Occupational<br>Stress and Coping<br>Styles with Well-<br>Being among<br>Couriers Three<br>Cities, Zhejiang<br>Province, China,<br>2021                | A total of 1.200<br>couriers in<br>Zhejiang, China                      | Cross-sectional<br>study design                                     | There is no relationship<br>between duration of work and<br>job stress, duration of work per<br>week shows p=0.629.   |
| 4. | (Deolla,<br>Widodo<br>and<br>Praningru<br>m, 2022)  | The Influence of<br>Workload on<br>Performance<br>Mediated by Work<br>Stress among<br>Couriers at J&T<br>Express Bengkulu<br>City.  | Sample 160<br>couriers J & T<br>express<br>Bengkulu city                | Descriptive<br>research with<br>mediation<br>regression<br>analysis | The p-value is 0.000, and the regression coefficient is 0.722, indicating that workload has a positive impact on courier work stress.   |
| 5  | (Zafriarni,<br>2025)                                | Effect of Work<br>Stress and<br>Workload on<br>Turnover Intention<br>at PT.JNE Padang   | A total of 127<br>workers   | Correlation test<br>analysis<br>Quantitative<br>research            | Type Workload and work<br>stress have a significant<br>relationship to workers' desire<br>for turnover intention due to<br>work pressure.   |
| 6  | (Joesyiana,<br>Basriani<br>and<br>Susanti,<br>2022) | The Influence of<br>Workload, Work<br>Conflict and Work<br>Stress on the<br>Performance of<br>Sprinter<br>Employees at PT<br>Garuda Express<br>Nusantara in<br>Pekanbaru. | The sample was<br>240 couriers at<br>PT Garuda<br>Express<br>Nusantara. | Quantitative<br>descriptive<br>research                             | There is an influence of<br>workload and work stress. The<br>high level of workload and<br>frequent conflicts make<br>employees experience stress.  |
| 7  | (Srisantyor<br>ini <i>et al.</i> ,<br>2023)         | DeterminantsofWorkStressinDeliveryCouriersinSouthTangerangArea  | Total of 152<br>couriers in South<br>Tangerang                          | Cross sectional<br>research design                                  | There is (p=0.038) a significant relationship between work stress and workload.   |

Table1. Results of Article Review



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# Relationship between Workload and Job Stress in Couriers

Stress is a harmful physical and emotional response caused by an imbalance between perceived demands and perceived resources and the individual's ability to cope with the demands. Stress can be defined as any stimulus or response from the human body to external and internal factors that may lead to various negative effects, ranging from a decline in health to the development of diseases (Manuaba, 1998, as cited in Tarwaka, 2019). A worker experiencing stress due to the work environment, interpersonal relationships, or tasks that are mismatched or exceed their capabilities may struggle to cope effectively, resulting in failure to meet the expectations of the company culture (ILO, 2016).

From the previously reviewed research, it is evident from six research articles that a significant relationship exists between workload and work stress in couriers. In the research by Deolla et al. (2022), a strong correlation was found, indicated by a t-value of 12.082 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold, meaning the second hypothesis is accepted. The findings suggest that as workload increases, so does the stress experienced by workers. This research shows a relationship between workload and work stress because the company has a target achievement system that makes couriers feel burdened so that it can affect the stress level of couriers. On the other hand, a research conducted by Xue et al. (2023), found no significant relationship between workload and work stress in couriers. There is no relationship between duration of work and job stress, duration of work per week shows p=0.629. This research concluded that the lack of a correlation could be attributed to the positive effects of effective mental health interventions on work stress

The results of the next research conducted by Riznanda et al. (2023) show that workload and work stress have a positive relationship, which means that the greater the workload, the higher the level of stress that employees will feel. Workload has a value of the coefficient of determination of 0.447, meaning that workload makes an effective contribution of 44.7% to work stress. Based these results, the hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely that there is a relationship between workload and work stress in the production division employees of PT. X. Likewise, research conducted by Manabung et al. (2018) shows that there is a relationship between workload and work stress with a p-value (0.004) and a range of 0.360 which has a positive level of relationship closeness. When the pressure exerted on workers surpasses their capabilities, they experience stress. In other words, an increase in workload corresponds to a greater likelihood of stress among employees. The effect of workload on work stress also has an impact on poor employee performance,

this is in accordance with research done by Lesmana et al. (2023) Workload and work stress have a significant effect on employee performance. Increased workload causes stress which results in decreased productivity and quality of work.

Work may affect a person's mental health, and in the EU, stress, depression, or anxiety is the second most common health problem linked to work. Nearly 45% of workers reported exposure to workplace conditions that pose a risk to their mental well-being. Findings from the 2022 OSH Pulse survey conducted by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) indicate that 27% of employees experience stress, anxiety, or depression that is attributed to or exacerbated by their occupational environment (EU-OSHA et al., 2024). In Indonesia, a survey conducted by Regus Asia in 2020 revealed that 64% of workers experienced increased stress levels compared to 2011 (Maghfiroh et al.., 2017).

These findings align with Mandelson's (1990) theory (Tarwaka, 2019), which defines work stress as a worker's inability to meet task demands, leading to discomfort during work. Additionally, stress can emerge due to triggering factors (stressors) that impact the body, prompting physiological responses to various situations. Therefore, stress is a condition or state of a person who feels uncomfortable with what they feel and has many pressures that attack individuals, causing excessive tension, anxiety and fear.

## Relationship between External and Internal Factors of Workload with Job Stress in Couriers

The results of this research on the external and internal factors of workload and stress among couriers, based on various journal articles, indicate that long working hours, tenure, gender, and task demands contribute to work-related stress. These results are consistent with research conducted by Zafriani (2025). Due to the high volume of work, tight time demands, and pressure to meet operational targets can cause employees to feel physically and mentally exhausted. Heavy workloads often reduce job satisfaction and lead to feelings of discomfort or stress, especially if not balanced with adequate support from the company if not balanced with adequate support from the company.

Research conducted by Yu Hong et al. (2022) found that long working hours can contribute to work-related stress. This occurs because couriers at the research site had an average working time of 10 hours per day or 48 hours per week. These working hours exceed the limits set by China's labor law, which stipulates a maximum of eight hours per day or 44 hours per week. Similarly, a study by Ujab et al. (2023) found that working hours have a significant impact on job stress among workers, and if not properly managed, they can negatively affect job performance. The results of this study most employees work with normal working hours, namely 28 or (52.8%) and almost all employees experience mild work stress, namely 41 or (77.4%). Statistical test results show significance with p-value  $0.037 < \alpha$  0.05. There is a significant effect of the application of working hours on the risk of work stress in employees.

According to Sofiana et al. (2020), several possibilities that can cause work stress include the perception of too much workload, pressure of long working hours, poor work environment and low level of supervision, insufficient professional power to perform tasks, avoidance of work disputes, and there are differences between ordinary employees and managers who are dissatisfied. This is indicated by the regression coefficient or sig. of 0.000. In addition, the R Square value shows a number of 0.202, which means that, in this study, workload is a good predictor of job stress, because it can explain the stress variable about 20.2% while 79.8% is explained by other variables.

Consistent with the research mentioned above, findings from seven articles indicate that external factors, such as high task demands and working hours that do not align with expectations, contribute to work-related stress. This suggests a clear relationship between external workload factors and work stress among couriers. In this study there are advantages and disadvantages of research. The advantage of this research is that there is already data from previous research that have been tested and the data are certain, thus making it easier for future researchers and readers. Meanwhile the drawback is the frequency of research bias in publications or journals that need to be analyzed. The data sources obtained are few because there have not been many studies that discuss the relationship between workload and work stress in couriers specifically.

## CONCLUSION

Based on a comparative analysis of selected articles, a relationship exists between workload and work stress among couriers. External factors, such as high work demands and long working hours, can lead to work-related stress, potentially disrupting job performance. To mitigate these risks, couriers and logistics service providers should carefully consider the impact of workload on employees to prevent excessive stress. One recommended approach is effective time management, ensuring tasks are completed according to a structured schedule without overburdening workers.

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None

#### **Author Contributions**

OINWS: Conceptualization, methodology, writing–original, draft, and editing; SIP: writing–review and editing; YDAW: writing–review and editing.

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