

# The Effect of Perceived Social Support on Perceived Stress Among Retail Workers

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study examines the effect of perceived social support on perceived stress among employees of a fashion accessory retail company in Indonesia, addressing the limited evidence on this relationship among Indonesian retail workers.

**Research Methodology:** A quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional causal-associative design was employed. Data were collected through an online survey of 369 employees using the Perceived Stress Scale-10 (PSS-10) and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). Simple linear regression was used to analyze the data.

**Results:** Extending previous studies that primarily focused on job stress, this study examines perceived stress as a broader psychological outcome influenced by both work- and non-work-related stressors. The findings revealed that perceived social support had a significant negative effect on perceived stress ( $B = -0.119, p < 0.001$ ). The relationship was weak ( $R = -0.264$ ), and perceived social support explained 7% of the variance in perceived stress ( $R^2 = 0.070$ ), indicating limited explanatory power.

**Conclusions:** Higher perceived social support is associated with lower perceived stress among retail workers. However, its relatively small effect suggests that perceived stress is influenced by multiple psychological and organizational factors beyond social support.

**Limitations:** The cross-sectional design and the use of respondents from a single fashion accessory retail company limit causal inference and the generalizability of the findings.

**Contributions:** This study provides empirical evidence from the Indonesian retail sector by highlighting perceived stress, rather than job stress, as an outcome of perceived social support, offering practical insights for workplace stress management.

**Keywords:** *Perceived Stress, Perceived Social Support, Retail Industry*

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## 1. Introduction

[Cohen \(1988\)](#) and [Cohen et al. \(2016\)](#) conceptualized stress as a series of constructs representing stages in a process whereby environmental demands exceed or overload an individual's adaptive capacity. This process is reflected in two dimensions: perceived self-efficacy and perceived self-helplessness, which may trigger psychological, behavioral, and biological responses that increase the risk of illness.

Retail workers are particularly vulnerable to stress due to the complex nature of their work, which requires managing multiple operational tasks while interacting directly with customers who display diverse behaviors and expectations. In addition to task demands, retail employees are frequently exposed to time pressure, emotional labor, workload fluctuations, and customer incivility, all of which require continuous psychological adaptation. According to the transactional model of stress proposed by [Lazarus and Folkman \(1984\)](#), these workplace demands become psychologically stressful when individuals appraise them as exceeding their available coping resources. Consequently, stressful workplace conditions may increase employees' perceived stress through cognitive appraisal processes rather than through objective job characteristics alone. Preliminary interviews conducted with the human resources team of a fashion accessory retail company in Bandung revealed that employee stress was considered one of the factors affecting workforce productivity. Manifestations of stress observed among employees included irritability during work, difficulty concentrating on tasks, prolonged fatigue, physical complaints such as headaches and sleep disturbances, and declining work motivation.

These observations are consistent with findings from recent studies indicating that high and poorly managed stress levels can negatively affect employee productivity through deteriorating physical health, reduced motivation, fatigue, burnout, and even depression ([Bui et al., 2021](#); [Chen et al., 2022](#); [Madhavi & Rao, 2023](#); [Pangabea et al., 2024](#); [Song et al., 2020](#); [Yu et al., 2022](#)). Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of strategic stress management within organizations. One way to enhance stress management practices is by identifying factors that contribute to employees' stress levels.

Contemporary research suggests that psychological factors are among the significant determinants of stress ([Cohen, 1988](#); [Cohen et al., 1983](#); [Lazarus & Folkman, 1984](#); [Snyder, 1999](#)). Within the context of workplace productivity, one psychological factor that has attracted considerable scholarly attention is perceived social support. According to [Zimet et al. \(1988\)](#) as cited in [Fauzia and Pebriani \(2024\)](#), perceived social support refers to an individual's perception of the availability and adequacy of support that can be obtained when needed. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that perceived social support is associated with lower stress levels. Individuals who perceive stronger social support tend to experience lower levels of stress, whereas inadequate perceived support is associated with increased stress ([Aziz et al., 2023](#); [McLean et al., 2023](#); [Nugroho & Soetjningsih, 2023](#); [Samson, 2020](#)).

Although numerous studies have investigated the relationship between perceived social support and stress, limited attention has been given to retail workers in Indonesia. Existing studies involving Indonesian retail employees have primarily examined stress as an independent variable influencing other organizational outcomes ([Mulyati et al., 2024](#); [Sari et al., 2025](#)). However, little research has focused on identifying factors that influence stress levels among retail workers, including perceived social support. Understanding how perceived social support affects stress is important because it can provide valuable insights for management practices aimed at designing performance management strategies that incorporate social support mechanisms within the workplace ([Gillman et al., 2023](#)).

Based on this research gap, the present study seeks to examine how perceived social support influences perceived stress among workers in the retail industry. Specifically, the study aims to identify the effect of perceived social support on perceived stress among retail employees. Perceived stress differs conceptually from job stress. Job stress refers to stress arising specifically from work-related conditions, such as workload, role conflict, or organizational demands. In contrast, perceived stress reflects an individual's overall cognitive appraisal of situations as stressful, regardless of whether the sources originate from work or non-work domains ([Cohen et al., 1983](#); [Lazarus & Folkman, 1984](#)).

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

### 2.1 Transactional Theory of Stress and Perceived Stress

The present study is grounded in the Transactional Theory of Stress proposed by [Lazarus and Folkman \(1984\)](#), which conceptualizes stress as a dynamic process resulting from the interaction between individuals and their environment. Rather than viewing stress as an inherent characteristic of external events, the theory emphasizes that stress arises through a cognitive appraisal process in which individuals evaluate whether environmental demands exceed their available coping resources. This appraisal process consists of two stages. Primary appraisal involves evaluating whether a situation is perceived as threatening, harmful, or challenging, whereas secondary appraisal concerns the evaluation of available resources and coping strategies to manage the situation. Consequently, individuals exposed to similar workplace conditions may experience different levels of stress depending on how they perceive and evaluate those conditions.

This theoretical perspective aligns with the concept of perceived stress developed by [Cohen et al. \(1983\)](#), who defined perceived stress as the degree to which individuals appraise situations in their lives as unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overwhelming. Unlike job stress, which specifically refers to stress arising from work-related demands such as workload, role ambiguity, or organizational factors, perceived stress reflects a broader psychological evaluation of stressors across both occupational and personal domains. [Cohen et al. \(2016\)](#) further proposed a stage model of stress in which environmental demands initiate psychological, behavioral, and biological responses when individuals perceive that these demands exceed their adaptive capacity. Therefore, perceived stress represents an individual's subjective interpretation of stressful experiences rather than the objective presence of stressors.

### 2.2 Perceived Social Support as a Psychological Resource

Within the framework of the Transactional Theory of Stress, coping resources play a central role in determining whether individuals perceive environmental demands as stressful. One important psychological resource is perceived social support. [Zimet et al. \(1988\)](#) defined perceived social support as an individual's perception that adequate emotional, informational, or instrumental support is available from significant others, family members, and friends when needed. This perception is considered more influential than the actual amount of support received because individuals' psychological responses are shaped by how available and reliable they believe their social support to be.

Perceived social support functions as an external coping resource that enhances individuals' confidence in managing stressful situations. According to [Fauzia and Pebriani \(2024\)](#), individuals who perceive stronger social support generally demonstrate better psychological adjustment because they believe assistance is available whenever they encounter difficulties. Within [Lazarus and Folkman \(1984\)](#) framework, such perceptions strengthen secondary appraisal by increasing individuals' perceived coping capacity. As a result, stressful situations are more likely to be interpreted as manageable challenges rather than overwhelming threats.

### 2.3 Perceived Social Support as a Buffering Mechanism

The stress-buffering mechanism provides a theoretical explanation for how perceived social support influences perceived stress. Based on the Transactional Theory of Stress, social support does not necessarily eliminate stressful events; instead, it influences the cognitive appraisal process through which stressful situations are interpreted. Employees who perceive sufficient support from family, friends, or significant others are more likely to believe that they possess adequate psychological resources to cope with workplace and personal demands. Consequently, the same work-related challenges may be perceived as less threatening, leading to lower levels of perceived stress.

Empirical findings consistently support this theoretical relationship. [Gillman et al. \(2023\)](#) demonstrated that social support contributes to more adaptive cognitive appraisals, which subsequently reduce perceived stress among employees. Their findings indicate that social support

influences how individuals interpret workplace demands before those demands develop into psychological distress. Similarly, [McLean et al. \(2023\)](#), reported that individuals with higher perceived social support experienced significantly lower perceived stress because supportive interpersonal relationships promoted more effective coping responses. Comparable findings were reported by [Aziz et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Samson \(2020\)](#), who found that stronger perceived social support was consistently associated with reduced stress levels across different populations. Collectively, these studies suggest that perceived social support serves as an important psychological resource that mitigates the negative consequences of environmental demands by improving individuals' appraisal and coping processes.

Drawing upon the Transactional Theory of Stress and previous empirical evidence, the present study proposes that perceived social support operates as a protective psychological resource that influences employees' cognitive appraisal of stressful situations. Retail employees frequently encounter demanding work environments characterized by customer interactions, workload fluctuations, and operational responsibilities. Employees who perceive stronger social support are expected to evaluate these demands as more manageable, thereby experiencing lower levels of perceived stress. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H<sub>1</sub>*: Perceived social support has a significant negative effect on perceived stress among retail workers

### 3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted using a quantitative, non-experimental approach with a causal-associative method to examine the effect of perceived social support on perceived stress among retail workers. A causal-associative method aims to identify the extent to which an independent variable contributes to influencing a dependent variable ([Sugiyono, 2023](#)). A cross-sectional design was employed because the study aimed to capture employees' perceived social support and perceived stress at a single point in time across the organization. This design is widely used to examine theoretically derived relationships between variables in organizational and psychological research. Although cross-sectional studies do not establish temporal causality in the same manner as longitudinal or experimental designs, they provide an appropriate approach for testing theory-based directional relationships and estimating the magnitude of associations between variables. Therefore, the causal interpretation in this study should be understood as theory-driven statistical inference rather than definitive evidence of temporal cause-and-effect relationships.

The participants in this study were 369 employees of a fashion accessory retail company, representing all employees distributed across 17 major cities in Indonesia, namely Bali, Bogor, Banjarmasin, Bandung, Cirebon, Depok, Jember, Kediri, Kudus, Solo, Lampung, Makassar, Malang, Palembang, Semarang, Sukabumi, and Yogyakarta. This retail company was selected as the research setting because its employees are responsible for both customer service and store operational activities, making their workload relatively complex and potentially stress-inducing. The selection of these participants was also based on findings from preliminary interviews, which revealed that employees' stress often originated from personal life circumstances rather than work-related issues. The preliminary interviews indicated that counseling sessions conducted with employees across different store branches consistently produced similar findings: when employees experienced stress in their personal lives, their behavior and concentration at work were adversely affected. This characteristic is consistent with the perceived stress variable employed in the present study.

The study was conducted in November 2025 and involved the entire employee population of the company as respondents, totaling 369 individuals. Therefore, a saturated sampling technique was applied, whereby all members of the population were included as the sample ([Machali, 2021](#)). A saturated sampling approach was considered appropriate because the total population was relatively manageable and accessible, allowing every eligible employee to participate in the study. Furthermore, employees were distributed across 17 cities but operated under the same organizational structure, standard operating procedures, human resource policies, and performance management system. Including the entire employee population across all branches minimized sampling bias and ensured

that employees from different geographical locations and operational settings were proportionally represented, thereby strengthening the representativeness of the findings within the organization. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The instruments used in this study included the Perceived Stress Scale-10 (PSS-10), which was employed to assess respondents' general levels of perceived stress during the previous month. The study also utilized the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) to measure respondents' overall levels of perceived social support.

### 3.1 PSS-10

The PSS-10 instrument used in this study was originally developed by [Cohen et al. \(1983\)](#) and its Indonesian version was validated by [Hakim et al. \(2024\)](#). The PSS-10 consists of 10 items designed to measure two primary dimensions, namely perceived self-efficacy and perceived helplessness. The instrument employs a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ("Never") to 4 ("Very Often").

An example item used to measure the perceived self-efficacy dimension is: *"In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?"* An example item measuring perceived helplessness is: *"In the last month, how often have you felt unable to control the important things in your life?"*

The validity of the Indonesian version of the PSS-10 was assessed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), with factor loadings ranging from 0.574 to 0.837. Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) analysis indicated that the instrument met all required criteria. The total Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of the Indonesian PSS-10 was 0.58, with a Construct Reliability value of 0.93. These results indicate that the instrument satisfies the requirements of a valid measurement scale Hair et al. as cited in [Hakim et al. \(2024\)](#).

### 3.2 MSPSS

The MSPSS was originally developed by [Zimet et al. \(1988\)](#) and later adapted and validated in Indonesian by [Sulistiani et al. \(2022\)](#). Consisting of 12 items, the MSPSS measures three dimensions including significant others, family, and friends. The instrument uses a seven-point ordinal response scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

An example item measuring the significant others dimension is: *"There is a special person who is around when I am in need."* An example item measuring the friends dimension is: *"I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows."* An example item measuring the family dimension is: *"I can talk about my problems with my family."*

The validity of the Indonesian version of the MSPSS was evaluated using the Rasch model. The results showed that all 12 items met the Rasch model requirements, with a raw explained variance of 44.1% and a raw unexplained variance of 13%, while the item fit statistics satisfied the criterion of  $0.5 < \text{MNSQ} < 1.5$ . Prior to the main study, both the MSPSS and PSS-10 instruments were pilot-tested on 55 employees working at the company's headquarters to confirm their reliability within a population sharing similar characteristics to the study respondents. These headquarters employees were selected because they possessed job positions and work complexities comparable to those of employees working across the company's retail outlets.

The reliability confirmation results indicated a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.925 for the MSPSS and 0.876 for the PSS-10. These findings suggest that both instruments were reliable and consistent in measuring perceived social support and perceived stress, thereby supporting their use for data collection involving 369 respondents across 17 cities. To address the research question, data analysis was conducted through statistical assumption testing, including normality and linearity tests, followed by hypothesis testing. Because the study examined the directional effect of a single independent variable (perceived social support) on a single dependent variable (perceived stress), simple linear regression was selected as the primary analytical technique. This method is appropriate for estimating the magnitude and direction of the relationship between the two variables. Prior to these analyses, the research

instruments also underwent preliminary testing to ensure that they met the required validity and reliability criteria.

### 3.3 Validity Test

As defined by [Machali \(2021\)](#), validity refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument accurately measures its intended construct. The validity test conducted on the perceived stress and perceived social support instruments involving 369 respondents produced a degree of freedom (df) of 367 ( $n-2$ ), resulting in a critical  $r$ -table value of 0.102. The validity criterion was fulfilled because all items in both variables demonstrated correlation coefficients ( $r$ -count) exceeding the critical value and met the statistical significance requirement ( $p < 0.05$ ). Based on these results, all items in the measurement instruments were declared valid.

### 3.4 Reliability Test

The consistency of measurement results obtained from an instrument is the primary indicator of reliability ([Machali, 2021](#)). The reliability test results for the research instruments are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability test results of perceived stress and perceived social support

| Variable                 | Cronbach Alpha | Criterion ( $> 0.70$ ) | Description |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Perceived Stress         | 0.739          | $> 0.70$               | Reliable    |
| Perceived Social Support | 0.829          | $> 0.70$               | Reliable    |

Table 1 shows that the reliability coefficient for the perceived stress variable was 0.739 ( $> 0.70$ ), while the perceived social support variable obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.829 ( $> 0.70$ ). These findings indicate that both instruments possess adequate reliability and are therefore suitable for measuring the research variables.

### 3.5 Residual Normality Test

Essentially, a normality test aims to examine whether the residuals in a study are normally distributed, as explained by [Machali \(2021\)](#). To assess the assumption of normality, this study employed a Normal P-P Plot. The procedure involved carefully observing the distribution pattern of data points on the graph. If the data points are distributed along and close to the diagonal line, the data can be considered normally distributed.

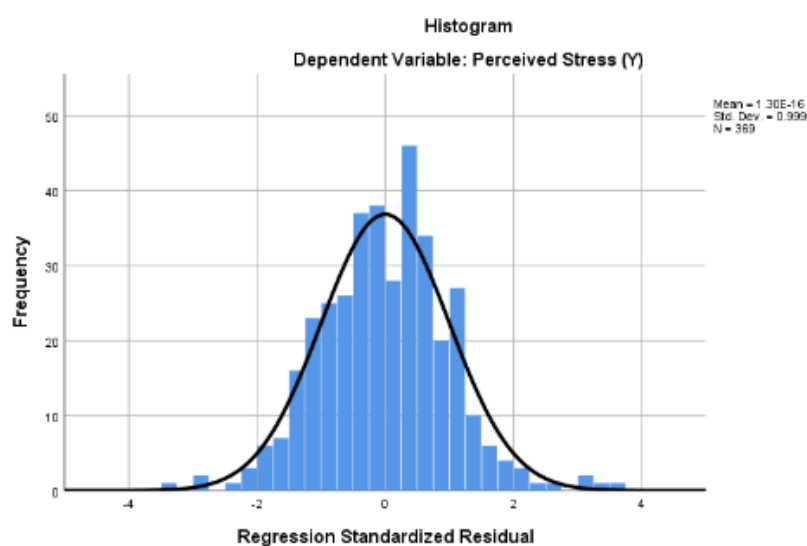


Figure 1. Histogram

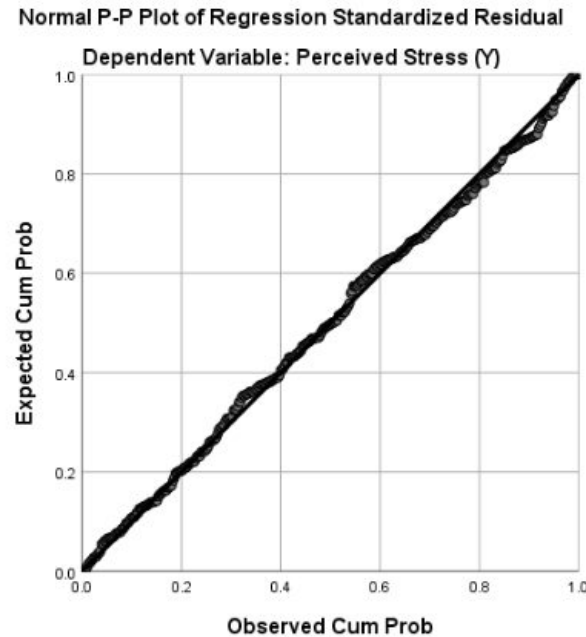


Figure 2. Normal P–P Plot

The normality assumption was initially assessed through visual inspection of the distribution pattern presented in Figure 1 (Histogram) and Figure 2 (Normal P–P Plot). As shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, the distribution of data points generally follows a straight-line pattern, indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed. Therefore, the data satisfy the normality assumption required for regression analysis. The fulfillment of the normality assumption was also confirmed through the Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistical test, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test Results

| Statistic                       | Value                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Variable</b>                 | <b>Unstandardized Residual</b> |
| Number of observations (N)      | 369                            |
| <b>Normal Parameters a,b</b>    |                                |
| Mean                            | 0.000                          |
| Standard Deviation              | 4.662                          |
| <b>Most Extreme Differences</b> |                                |
| Absolute                        | 0.039                          |
| Positive                        | 0.039                          |
| Negative                        | –0.031                         |
| Test Statistic                  | 0.039                          |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)          | 0.200 <sup>c,d</sup>           |

The test results indicate a p-value of 0.200, which exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data used in this study are normally distributed.

### 3.6 Heteroscedasticity Test

In principle, a heteroscedasticity test is conducted to determine whether unequal variances exist within a regression model (Machali, 2021). In this study, heteroscedasticity was assessed using the Glejser test. The decision criterion states that a model is free from heteroscedasticity when all independent variables exhibit significance values greater than 0.05 (Siregar, 2016). The results of the heteroscedasticity test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

| Predictor                | Unstandardized Coefficient (B) | Standard Error | Standardized Coefficient ( $\beta$ ) | t      | p-value |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Constant                 | 4.334                          | 0.849          | –                                    | 5.102  | < .001  |
| Perceived Social Support | –0.012                         | 0.014          | –0.043                               | –0.832 | .406    |

Based on the results shown in Table 3, the independent variable obtained a significance value of 0.406, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.05. This finding indicates that no heteroscedasticity was detected in the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In other words, the model satisfies the assumption of homoscedasticity.

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted to examine whether the variance of the residuals remained constant across observations. The results of the heteroscedasticity test are presented through the scatter plot in Figure 3.

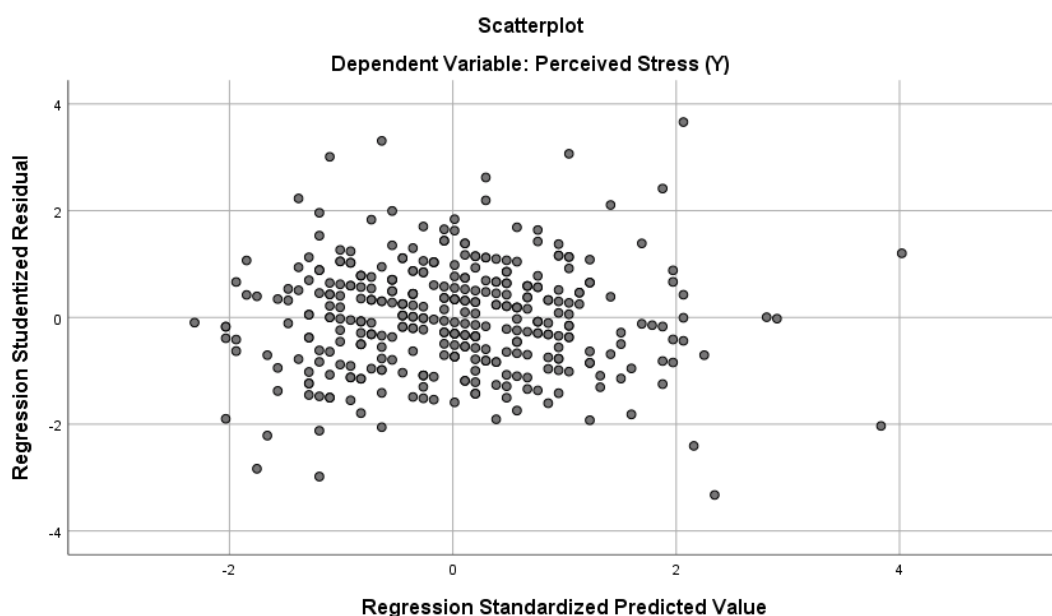


Figure 3. Scatter Plot

As illustrated in Figure 3, the data points are evenly dispersed around the zero line. This distribution pattern further confirms the absence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model. Therefore, the model can be classified as homoscedastic.

### 3.7 Linearity Test

Next, a linearity test was conducted to determine whether the variables under investigation exhibited a linear relationship or a non-linear pattern (Machali, 2021). The data were analyzed using SPSS through the Test for Linearity procedure. The hypotheses formulated for this test were as follows:

$H_0$ : The data are linear

$H_1$ : The data are not linear

The decision criteria applied were:

Sig.  $\geq 0.10$ :  $H_0$  accepted.

Sig.  $< 0.10$ :  $H_0$  rejected.

The results of the linearity test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Linearity test results

| Source of Variation       | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig.   |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|--------|
| Between Groups (Combined) | 2100.720       | 52  | 40.398      | 1.965  | < .001 |
| Linearity                 | 598.605        | 1   | 598.605     | 29.121 | < .001 |
| Deviation from Linearity  | 1502.115       | 51  | 29.453      | 1.433  | .035   |
| Within Groups             | 6495.719       | 316 | 20.556      | –      | –      |
| Total                     | 8596.439       | 368 | –           | –      | –      |

Based on the results presented in Table 4, the F-value for the linearity component was 29.121 with a significance value of 0.000. This value is lower than the critical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that perceived social support and perceived stress exhibit a linear relationship.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Results of Correlation and Coefficient of Determination Analysis

For the purposes of this study, the coefficient of determination was calculated to determine the extent to which the variance of the independent variable could explain the total variance of the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination ranges from 0 to 1. A value of 0 indicates that no relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables. Conversely, a value approaching or equal to 1 indicates a strong relationship between the two variables. The results of the correlation analysis and coefficient of determination analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of correlation and coefficient of determination analysis

| Model | R      | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin–Watson |
|-------|--------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1     | –0.264 | 0.070    | 0.067             | 4.668                      | 2.015         |

Referring to the results presented in Table 5, the correlation coefficient ( $R$ ) was -0.264, while the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.070. The  $R^2$  value indicates that perceived social support explained only 7% of the variance in perceived stress, whereas the remaining 93% was attributable to other factors not included in the present model. Therefore, although the regression model was statistically significant, its explanatory power should be considered relatively low. These findings indicate the extent to which perceived social support contributes to variations in perceived stress.

### 4.2 Results of the Simple Linear Regression Hypothesis Test

The research hypothesis regarding the effect of perceived social support on perceived stress was tested using simple linear regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of the simple linear regression hypothesis test

| Predictor                        | B      | SE    | $\beta$ | t      | p      |
|----------------------------------|--------|-------|---------|--------|--------|
| Constant                         | 22.426 | 1.363 | –       | 16.456 | < .001 |
| Perceived Social Support ( $X$ ) | –0.119 | 0.023 | –0.264  | –5.241 | < .001 |

Based on the regression results presented above, the regression equation can be expressed as follows:

$$Y_1 = a + b_1X_1 + e \quad (1)$$

$$Y_1 = 22,426 - 0,119(X_1) + e \quad (2)$$

From the regression equation 1 and 2, the constant value of 22.426 indicates that when perceived social support is equal to zero, the predicted value of perceived stress is 22.426. The analysis further revealed that perceived social support ( $X$ ) had a regression coefficient of -0.119 with a significance value of 0.000. Since this value is lower than 0.05, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is statistically significant. This finding indicates that higher levels of perceived social support are associated with lower levels of perceived stress. However, considering that the model explained only 7% of the variance in perceived stress ( $R^2 = 0.070$ ), this statistically significant relationship should be interpreted as having limited explanatory capacity. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that perceived social support affects perceived stress is accepted.

#### 4.2.1 Partial t-Test

In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted through two stages: partial testing and simultaneous testing. To test the partial hypothesis, a t-test was employed. The decision criterion states that the hypothesis is accepted when the calculated t-value exceeds the critical t-value. The calculated t-value was obtained from the regression output, while the critical t-value was determined using a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

The degree of freedom (df) was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Degree of freedom} = n - k - 1$$

$$\text{Degree of freedom} = 369 - 1 - 1$$

Thus, the critical ttable was = 1,9664

The partial t-test was conducted to examine the significance of the effect of perceived social support on perceived stress. The results of the partial t-test analysis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Results of the partial t-Test

| Model | Predictor                        | Unstandardized Coefficients |       | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig.   |
|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| B     | Std. Error                       | Beta                        |       |                           |        |        |
| 1     | Constant                         | 22.426                      | 1.363 | –                         | 16.456 | < .001 |
|       | Perceived Social Support ( $X$ ) | –0.119                      | 0.023 | –0.264                    | –5.241 | < .001 |

Based on the test results, the calculated t-value for the perceived social support variable was |-5.241|, which exceeded the critical t-value of 1.9664. In addition, the significance value was 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This result indicates that perceived social support ( $X$ ) has a significant effect on perceived stress ( $Y$ ).

#### 4.2.2 Simultaneous F-Test

The simultaneous test was conducted to determine whether the independent variable collectively contributed to the dependent variable by comparing the calculated F-value with the critical F-value obtained from the F-distribution. The degrees of freedom used in this analysis consisted of a numerator degree of freedom equal to the number of independent variables ( $k=1$ ) and a denominator degree of freedom calculated as  $n-k-1$ , where  $n$  represents the number of respondents and  $k$  represents the number of independent variables. With a sample size of 369 respondents, the denominator degree of freedom was  $369-1-1=367$ . Accordingly, the critical F-value ( $F_{table}$ ) at the specified significance level was 3.8669.

The decision criteria were as follows: if the calculated F-value was smaller than the critical F-value, the hypothesis would be rejected. Conversely, if the calculated F-value exceeded the critical F-value, the hypothesis would be accepted. The results of the simultaneous F-test analysis are presented in Table 8 to determine whether perceived social support simultaneously has a significant effect on perceived stress.

Table 8. Results of the simultaneous F-Test

| Model | Source     | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig.   |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|--------|
| 1     | Regression | 598.605        | 1   | 598.605     | 27.468 | < .001 |
|       | Residual   | 7,997.834      | 367 | 21.792      | –      | –      |
|       | Total      | 8,596.439      | 368 | –           | –      | –      |

Referring to the data presented in Table 8, the calculated  $F$ -value was 27.468, which was greater than the critical  $F$ -value of 3.8669. Furthermore, the significance value was 0.000, which was below the threshold of 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted, indicating that perceived social support as the independent variable significantly affects perceived stress as the dependent variable.

#### 4.3 Discussion

The findings of this study yielded several important results. First, the correlation coefficient ( $R$ ) was -0.264, indicating a weak negative relationship between perceived social support and perceived stress. Second, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.070, suggesting that perceived social support explained only a small proportion of the variance in perceived stress. Furthermore, the regression coefficient for perceived social support ( $X$ ) was -0.119, accompanied by a significance value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). Taken together, these findings indicate that perceived social support has a statistically significant effect on perceived stress among retail industry employees in this study. Nevertheless, statistical significance should not be interpreted as evidence of a strong practical effect because both the correlation magnitude and explanatory power of the model were relatively small. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted by [Aziz et al. \(2023\)](#), [McLean et al. \(2023\)](#), [Nugroho and Soetjningsih \(2023\)](#), and [Samson \(2020\)](#), which demonstrated that perceived social support influences individuals' perceived stress. Specifically, individuals who perceive greater social support tend to experience lower levels of stress.

Nevertheless, the  $R^2$  value of 0.070 indicates that perceived social support accounts for only 7% of the variance in perceived stress. In other words, approximately 93% of the variance in perceived stress can be explained by other variables that were not included in the present research model. Similarly, the correlation coefficient of 0.264 falls within the range of 0.10–0.39, which, according to [Schober et al. \(2018\)](#), represents a weak correlation. The effect size of perceived social support on perceived stress was also calculated using Cohen  $f^2$  formula, namely  $R^2/(1-R^2)$ . The resulting value was 0.075, indicating a small effect size ([Cohen, 1992](#)). This finding indicates that perceived social support represents only one of several determinants of perceived stress. Consequently, interventions aimed solely at strengthening social support may contribute to stress reduction but are unlikely to substantially decrease employees' perceived stress without simultaneously addressing other psychological and organizational factors.

The weak influence of perceived social support on perceived stress is consistent with previous studies that reported similar findings ([Aziz et al., 2023](#)). This limited effect may be attributable to the presence of other factors that have been identified as contributors to perceived stress, including self-efficacy ([Ahmad, 2020](#); [Muhtar & Wijaya, 2024](#); [Padamaley et al., 2024](#)), personality dimensions, and coping strategies ([Chen et al., 2022](#); [Panis et al., 2019](#); [Widjast & Halim, 2021](#)).

Based on follow-up interviews with the human resources team, the results of this study are consistent with workplace realities observed in the field. The HR team reported that a supportive work environment in retail stores often contributes to higher employee productivity. The present findings provide further insight into this phenomenon, suggesting that a supportive workplace atmosphere may help reduce employees' stress levels, thereby enabling them to maintain better work performance and productivity.

#### 4.4 Practical Implications

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis, the perceived stress variable had a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 35. The mean score was 15.40, with a standard deviation of 4.833, as presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of the research variables

|                          | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------|-----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Perceived Social Stress  | 369 | 0       | 35      | 15,40 | 4,833          |
| Perceived Social Support | 369 | 16      | 84      | 59,17 | 10,737         |
| Valid N (listwise)       | 369 | -       | -       | -     | -              |

As a note, in regression analysis, normality testing is not applied separately to each research variable. Instead, this assumption is assessed using the residuals (or errors) generated by the regression model. This approach is consistent with the classical assumptions of regression, which require the residuals to be normally distributed (Field, 2024; Gujarati & Porter, 2009). Therefore, the residual standard deviation of 4.66189293 obtained from the normality test should not be directly compared with the standard deviation of the perceived stress variable (4.833) reported in the descriptive statistics, as the two values represent different constructs. Accordingly, the assessment of normality in this study is based on the distribution of the residuals rather than the distribution of the research variables themselves.

The descriptive statistics indicate that the average stress level of the respondents falls within the “moderate” category (Cohen et al., 1983). Meanwhile, the perceived social support variable produced scores ranging from 16 to 84. The data showed a mean score of 59.17 and a standard deviation of 10.737. These findings indicate that the respondents' average level of perceived social support can also be categorized as “moderate” (Zimet et al., 1988). Descriptively, the respondents were predominantly employees with less than one year of work experience, accounting for 82.4% of the total sample. The distribution of respondents based on their length of employment is presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Length of employment

|       | Length of Employment | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | <1 years             | 304       | 82,4    | 82,4          | 82,4               |
|       | 1-5 years            | 47        | 12,7    | 12,7          | 95,1               |
|       | 6-10 years           | 18        | 4,9     | 4,9           | 100,0              |
|       | Total                | 369       | 100,0   | 100,0         | -                  |

The dominance of relatively new employees, with less than one year of tenure representing 82.4% of respondents, suggests that the significant effect of perceived social support on perceived stress can serve as a strategic consideration for management in managing employee stress levels. This can be achieved by improving the quality of perceived social support through several specific programs aimed at strengthening supportive relationships among employees, including weekly peer support groups, where management provides discussion forums or group sessions to accommodate employees' concerns at retail stores and identify factors that help employees feel supported at work; specific training programs on supportive communication for supervisors to enhance their ability to communicate effectively and supportively with employees; and mentoring policies for new employees to provide more personalized support, understand their individual needs, and identify factors that help them perceive adequate support in the workplace. Increasing the quality of perceived social support, which subsequently contributes to reducing perceived stress, is expected to improve employee productivity and work performance.

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the effect of perceived social support on perceived stress among fashion accessory retail workers in Indonesia. Based on the analysis of data obtained from 369 respondents, the findings demonstrated that perceived social support has a negative and significant effect on perceived stress. This indicates that employees who perceive higher levels of social support tend to experience lower levels of stress.

The correlation analysis revealed a weak negative relationship between perceived social support and perceived stress ( $R = -0.264$ ), while the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.070$ ) indicated that perceived social support contributed to explaining approximately 7% of the variance in perceived stress. The regression analysis further confirmed that perceived social support significantly predicted perceived stress ( $\beta = -0.119$ ; Sig. = 0.000). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that perceived social support significantly affects perceived stress was supported. Nevertheless, the relatively small effect size indicates that perceived social support should not be regarded as the dominant predictor of employees' perceived stress. Rather, it represents one contributing psychological resource among multiple factors that collectively influence stress experiences in the workplace.

However, the relatively small contribution of perceived social support suggests that stress among retail workers is influenced by various other factors beyond the scope of this study. Factors such as self-efficacy, personality characteristics, and coping strategies may also play important roles in shaping employees' perceptions of stress. Furthermore, the descriptive findings showed that both perceived stress and perceived social support were categorized as moderate, indicating that social support remains an important but not the sole mechanism in managing workplace stress. Accordingly, workplace stress management should adopt a multifaceted approach by combining efforts to strengthen social support with interventions targeting other psychological and organizational determinants of stress.

### 5.2 Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional research design limits the ability to draw conclusions regarding causal relationships between perceived social support and perceived stress over time. Second, the study involved employees from only one fashion accessory retail company, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other retail sectors or organizational contexts. In addition, the relatively limited explanatory power of the model ( $R^2 = 0.070$ ) indicates that most of the variation in perceived stress was explained by variables not examined in this study. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as demonstrating that perceived social support is only one component within a broader network of factors associated with employees' perceived stress.

### 5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research is encouraged to address these limitations by applying longitudinal research designs to examine changes in perceived social support and stress levels over time. Further studies may also involve employees from various retail sectors or organizations with different characteristics to improve the generalizability of findings. Moreover, future researchers are recommended to incorporate additional variables, such as self-efficacy, personality dimensions, coping strategies, workload, or organizational factors, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to perceived stress among employees.

From a practical perspective, organizations may strengthen workplace social support through several interventions implemented according to their feasibility and expected organizational impact. First, low-cost and easily implemented initiatives, such as peer support groups and regular team-sharing sessions, may be introduced to encourage supportive interpersonal interactions among employees. Second, supervisor communication training should be prioritized as a medium-term strategy because supervisors play an important role in shaping employees' perceptions of organizational support and psychological well-being. Finally, mentoring programs for newly hired employees may serve as a

longer-term intervention by facilitating social integration, strengthening workplace relationships, and helping new employees adapt more effectively to job demands. Although these interventions may contribute to reducing perceived stress, they should ideally be integrated with broader stress management initiatives that also address other psychological and organizational factors influencing employees' well-being.

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### Author Contributions

RANPS responsible for conceptualization, research design, data collection, data analysis and manuscript drafting. NR and AM contributed to methodology development, data validation, supervision, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the final version of the manuscript.

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