

# The Toxicity of our City: The Effect of Toxic Workplace Environment on Employee's Performance

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## ABSTRAK

Dalam melayani wajib pajak, SAMSAT harus memperhatikan kenyamanan lingkungan. Namun kurangnya penjelasan mengenai topik samsat khususnya pada sektor pelayanan publik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh lingkungan kerja terhadap kinerja pegawai SAMSAT di Kabupaten Maros. Metode yang digunakan yaitu kuantitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif dengan angket jenis skala likert. 31 pegawai SAMSAT Kabupaten Maros direkrut sebagai responden. Uji validitas instrumen menggunakan analisis item dan dihitung menggunakan rumus product moment, sedangkan uji reliabilitas menggunakan rumus Cronbach's Alpha. Prasyarat analisis meliputi uji normalitas dan uji linieritas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tingkat kebaikan lingkungan kerja di SAMSAT Kabupaten Maros masuk dalam kategori baik yaitu 60,22% dari 100%. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lingkungan tempat kerja membentuk kinerja karyawan. Selain itu, lingkungan kerja yang toxic akan berdampak negatif terhadap kinerja karyawan dan dapat menyebabkan ketidakpuasan kerja, hal ini lebih mungkin dialami oleh karyawan junior. Oleh karena itu untuk mengatasi masalah ini, ada banyak strategi yang dapat dilakukan untuk mengatasi masalah ini. Salah satu strateginya adalah bagi pemimpin organisasi untuk menunjukkan dukungan mereka kepada karyawan dengan mengakui masalah mereka di tempat kerja dan memberikan bantuan penting, terutama untuk tugas-tugas yang memiliki persyaratan yang lebih menegangkan.

## ABSTRACT

In serving taxpayers, SAMSAT must pay attention to environmental comfort. However, an explanation regarding the Samsat topic, especially in the public service sector. This study aims to analyze the effect of the work environment on the performance of SAMSAT employees in Maros Regency. The method used is quantitative with a descriptive approach. This research is quantitative research with a Likert scale type of questionnaire. 31 SAMSAT employees of Maros Regency were recruited as respondents. The instrument validity test uses item analysis and is calculated using the product-moment formula, while the reliability test uses Cronbach's Alpha formula. Prerequisites of analysis include normality test and linearity test. The results showed that the work environment in SAMSAT Maros Regency was in a suitable category, namely 60.22% from 100%. The results of the study indicate that the workplace environment shapes employee performance. In addition, a toxic work environment will harm employee performance and lead to work outcomes. It is more likely to be experienced by junior employees. Therefore, to overcome this problem, many strategies can be done to overcome this problem. One strategy is for organizational leaders to support employees by acknowledging their problems at work and providing essential assistance, especially for tasks with more stressful requirements.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The high-speed competition which is happening in the global world today, is marked by various developments and environmental changes. The impact of environmental changes affects the order of human life in the fields of politics, economics, law, government and socio-cultural life (Boye & Grönlund, 2018; Delios et al., 2021; Wang & Brower, 2019). Indonesia as a nation cannot avoid this global influence. National boundaries are no longer an obstacle to the process of relations or interactions between human

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beings in the world for various purposes. This change also occurred in the management of government administration and development. The patterns of centralized governance and development are less actual, so a decentralized approach is needed (Kurniawaty et al., 2019; Pratama, 2019; Wang & Brower, 2019). This approach emphasizes that the central government should act as a regulator of the interaction process to create a conducive climate to accommodate the interaction process of social, political, and economic life of the community.

Public demands on the government are to organize good governance, and leadership are the most prominent issues in the management of public administration, this demand is a natural thing and the government should be able to respond by making changes that are directed at the realization of good governance (Anjum et al., 2018; Narasuci et al., 2018; Pratama, 2019). Such issues regarding employees deserve attention for the company because employees are an important resource for the company's success. Employees who have high ability or competence at work are able to provide high performance for the company, so that when the employee leaves the company, the company has suffered losses (Budiyanti et al., 2018; Suzuki & Demircioglu, 2021; Wang & Brower, 2019). Performance has an important role in an organization to achieve its goals. Even some sources state that, performance can achieve its goals. Performance is a description of the level of achievement of the implementation of an activity/policy program in realizing the goals, objectives, mission and vision of the organization contained in the strategic planning of an organization (George et al., 2019; Schleu & Hüffmeier, 2021). Therefore, employee performance is a measurement of the results of handling the work that can be done by employees as measured by their work quality and quantity (Audenaert et al., 2021; Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2018). The size from the quality perspective shows the work result is based on the standards set by the company, and the quantity measure is based on the level of completion or the number of units produced from the work performed by employees.

Organization has a number of objectives that must be achieved in the implementations of its operations. The setting of these goals is based on the capability of the resources. To achieve the goal, the company needs to improve the company's performance by taking into account the factors of the work environment, because providing a good work environment is one of the factors that can increase the productivity of employees in the company and the work environment referred to here is in the form of work facilities, work atmosphere, interaction with fellow employees, work security and safety, so that employees will always feel comfortable and optimistic at work (Anjum et al., 2018; Audenaert et al., 2021). The work environment is everything work-related, events, people and others that affect the way people work (Audenaert et al., 2021; Schleu & Hüffmeier, 2021). The work environment is a collection of physical and non-physical factors, both of which affect the way employees work. The work environment is the overall relationship that occurs with employees in the workplace. Everything that is in the workplace is a work environment. Employees are in a work environment when employees carry out work activities, and all forms of relationships involving these employees include the work environment (Dipoatmodjo et al., 2021) (Schleu & Hüffmeier, 2021; Teoh et al., 2021).

One of the Indonesian government's public service providers is SAMSAT. This organization is assigned to serve the community in terms of payment of Motorized Vehicle Tax and Motorized Vehicle Title Transfer Tax (BBNKB). The tax sector is a sector that is quite influential in the implementation of physical and non-physical national development. Given the importance of the Motor Vehicle Tax and BBNKB Tax sectors in the context of national development, government officials need to provide the maximum possible and satisfactory service to taxpayers. One of the SAMSATs in South Sulawesi Province is the SAMSAT in Maros Regency. SAMSAT Maros Regency as a public organization is required to serve the community as a taxpayer as best as possible and can satisfy taxpayers (Firmansyah et al., 2020; Ginting et al., 2022; Pratama, 2019). In serving taxpayers, SAMSAT must pay attention to environmental comfort. The indicators for measuring the work environment of the SAMSAT Maros City are based on the sub-components of the work environment, such as the measurement of the work environment from the technological environment, the human environment, work environment, and organizational environment. There are several factors in the work environment that must be considered. Physical work environment factors, including hygiene factors, lighting factors, air exchange factors, noise factors, safety factors (Anjum et al., 2018; Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019).

If the toxic workplace problem remains occurring, then it will be a great loss for the organization in terms of productivity and overall performance, not to mention the annual cost of depressive and anxiety disorders for almost \$US1.15 trillion (Michalak & Ashkanasy, 2020). In addition, extant literature offers numerous insights and empirical solutions. However, previous study on this topic offer only employ sample size in small amount and only conducted in SME's in China (Anjum et al., 2018; Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019; Delmas & Pekovic, 2018; Green, 2021; Rasool et al., 2021). Current study, future avenue for developing the topic may conducted in another sector, or in this study is public service, which this current

research will answer to (Rasool et al., 2021). By researching these environmental factors, we can assess how the influence of environmental comfort on employee performance in serving the community. Based on the description above, the purpose of this study is to examine the work environment on performance in adopting a healthy work environment and explore how a toxic work environment may shape employee performance.

## 2. METHODS

A quantitative method with a descriptive approach was employed in this research in order to assess the relationships among work environment on employees' performance. Quantitative methods can be interpreted as research methods based on the philosophy of positivism, to examine certain populations or samples, data collection using research instruments, data analysis is quantitative/statistical, with the aim of describing and testing hypotheses that has been established (Puspitaningtyas & Kurniawan, 2016). Population is a generalization area consisting of: objects/subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by researchers to be studied and then drawn conclusions (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Majid, 2018). The sample is part or representative of the population under study. The sample is part of the population that has relatively the same characteristics and is considered to be representative of the population. Sampling in this study used saturated simple random sampling, which is a sampling technique when all populations are used as samples (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Lakens, 2022). Furthermore, all employees who work in the office at the SAMSAT office will be respondents, totalling 31 people. All of the respondents were recruited, during their break hour in the working days, by distributing questionnaires. Based on the definition of the variables, the researchers then compiled questions in the form of a questionnaire to measure the variables studied. Scale items for assessing key constructs, such as work environment and performance were adapted from prior studies' validated measures (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2020). A follow up interview was conducted by researchers as there were several interesting facts mentioned by junior employee during the data collection process.

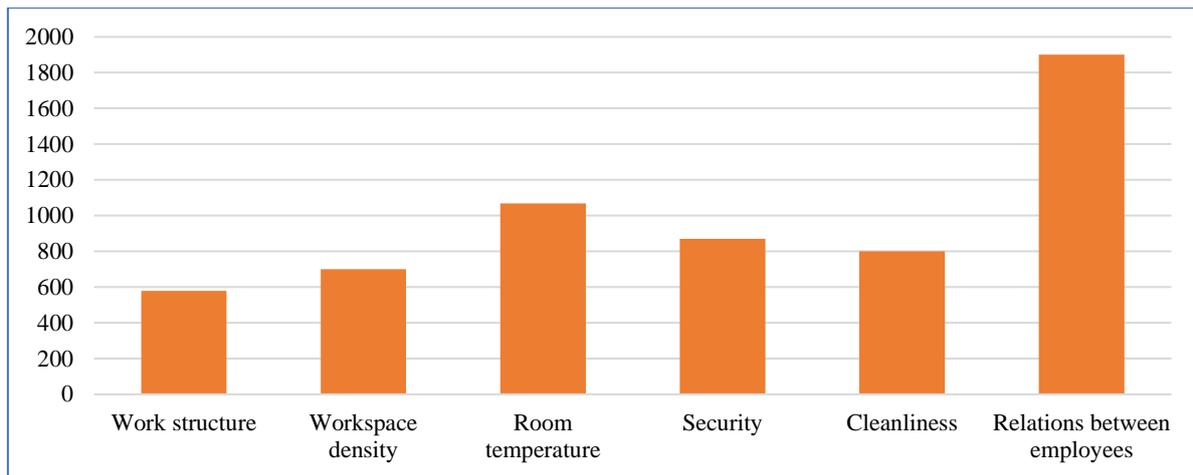
Moreover, this research conducted validity and reliability tests in order to determine the extent to which the questionnaire made is appropriate and can be beneficial in answering research questions. In research, data has a role because it is a description of the variables studied and as a means of proving the hypothesis. Validity is a measure that shows the levels of validity or validity of an instrument (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). Furthermore, reliability test is useful to determine whether the instrument, in this case the questionnaire, can be used more than once, at least by the same respondent will produce consistent data. In other words, instrument reliability characterizes the level of consistency (Lakens, 2022; Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). Likert scale is used to measure attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of a person or group of people about social phenomena (Lee et al., 2019). Therefore, to find out the measurement of respondents' answers in this study which used a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire, the authors used a Likert summated rating scale. SPSS statistical software package 25.0 was used to analyse the data. The hypotheses and their relationships were tested through correlation and regression analysis (Nguyen et al., 2020; Puspitaningtyas & Kurniawan, 2016).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Results

The results of the research conducted by Maros Regency regarding the work environment with a total of 31 questionnaires and 30 questions with a score given to each statement item a maximum of 5 and a minimum of 1 given to the employees of SAMSAT Maros Regency, obtaining a minimum score of 83 and a maximum score of 97, the mean is 90, the median is 91, the mode is 88 and the standard deviation is 31. Then determine the number of class intervals (K) with  $n = 31$  respondents. Based on the results, most of the respondents, 65% of the 31 respondents stated that the work environment, SAMSAT Maros Regency was in the excellent category, 35% of the respondents said the work environment was in the good category, 0% of the respondents said it was not good and 0% of the respondents declared not good.

Based on Figure 1, there is a recapitulation of achievement percentage and category per work environment indicator values per indicator, including structure 578, workspace density 700, workspace temperature 1068, security 870, cleanliness 800, relations between employees 1900. According to these data, relationship between employees were the highest score. It means that employees have strong emotional bond among them. It also means that it can create a supportive working atmosphere which eventually will shape the productivity. On the other hand, the work structure was the lowest. It can be argued that the structure and the role within are vague. It can be seen that many employees were idle while the others were occupied. This, can be a hassle in achieving organizational' objectives.



**Figure 1.** Recapitulation of Achievement Percentage and Category per Workplace Environment Indicator

The results of research conducted at the SAMSAT office in MAROS Regency regarding employee performance with a total of 31 questionnaires and a total of 17 statements with a score given to each statement item a maximum of 5 and a minimum of 1 given to employees, obtaining a minimum score of 79 and a maximum score of 91, the mean is 87, the median is 88, the mode is 88 and the standard deviation is 2.97. Next, determine the number of class intervals ( $K$ ) with  $n = 31$  respondents, then:  $K = 1 + 3.3 \log n = 1 + 3.3 \log 31$ , hence = 6.0 (rounded to 6). The next step is to determine the data range, namely the highest score - the lowest score + 1, then the highest score is 91 and the lowest score is and for the length of the class, namely the data range divided by the number of classes, it is rounded up to 6. Based on the calculation above with a value of  $K = 6$  and the value of  $i = 7$ , then the frequency distribution table is:

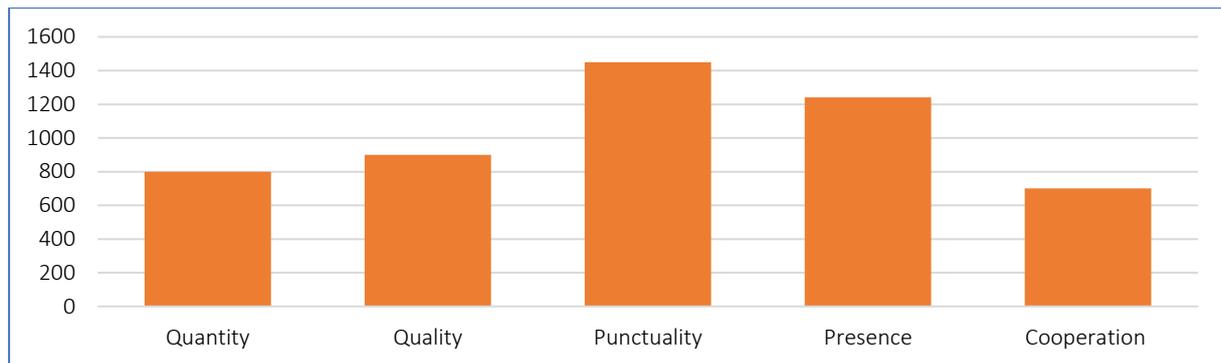
**Table 1.** Frequency Distribution of Employee Performance Variables

No	Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	76 – 80	2	2%
2.	81 – 85	5	5%
3.	86 – 90	21	21%
4.	91 – 95	3	3%
5.	96 – 100	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the table of frequency distribution of employee performance variables, the score obtained by respondents on employee performance uses a large distribution range. The next description is to find out the percentage of achievement and categories per employee performance indicator, the step is to know the percentage value of each indicator. In this study, the hypothesis will be tested using a simple regression analysis method, because the independent variable in this study is only one, that is work environment. The hypothesis in this study is  $H_0$ : There is no positive and significant relationship between the work environment and employee performance. The work environment has a positive and significant effect on the performance of the employees of the Maros SAMSAT Office. To analyse the hypothesis is assisted by using SPSS 20. Here are the results of a simple regression analysis:

**Table 2.** Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items <sup>a</sup>	N of Items
-0.074	-0.075	2



**Figure 2.** The results of calculating the percentage of achievements and categories per employee performance indicator

## Discussion

Based on the results of statistical analysis, it was found that the work environment had a significant effect on the performance of SAMSAT employees in Maros Regency. While the results of the description analysis obtained from the results of respondents' answers on the percentage of achievement and categories per work environment indicator for 31 respondents in the SAMSAT Office of Maros Regency, namely the colouring and decorating of the room is in the good category (60.30%), this is strengthened based on the results of monitoring Researchers at the time of distributing and taking the questionnaire that the colour used in each workspace at the SAMSAT Office of Maros Regency is predominantly white which has the impression of being clean, focused, innocent, and pure which can make employees feel calm, comfortable and enthusiastic at work (Khan & Mohiya, 2020; Savavibool, 2020).

The work environment itself is everything that is around the workplace that can affect the physical and psychological conditions of employees in completing the work assigned to them either directly or indirectly so that the work environment can be said to be good if employees can work optimally, calmly and have high productivity (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019; Tran et al., 2018). Completion of assigned work will greatly affect the work environment including the physical and non-physical work environment. Physical work environment in the form of colour, cleanliness, air exchange, lighting, security, and noise. Colours that exist in the work environment can be walls, clothes, work equipment, etc (Savavibool, 2020; Savavibool et al., 2016). Cleanliness of the workplace, cleanliness is very influential on the health and mental condition of employees (Anjum et al., 2018). Air exchange, air exchange greatly determines the physical fitness of employees, uncirculated air exchange will cause the room temperature to become hot. Lighting is very important because it affects employee productivity, eye fatigue will increase if the light level in the workplace is not appropriate so that employees will experience eye strain. Security, the existence of securities guarantees for personal property and they will make employees feel calm at work (Abadi et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020; Wang & Brower, 2019).

Another interesting result is that despite of the high score on the relationship among employees, the lowest score on employee performance was the ability to cooperate. This is an oxymoron result. Apparently in this research, most of employees believed that good emotional relationship among them is important in creating friendly workplace. However, in the reality, we cannot ignore the office politic practices in this research. A discreet interview conducted toward a junior employee revealed that he and his fellow juniors were bullied by the seniors. The seniors justify their action by saying that is merely a "rite of passage" and "a cultural welcome ceremony". Another junior employee admitted that they have to be a top performer during their early career because that was the moment of truth for the junior employee, a moment to prove their worth to the organization. Consequently, their performance is above the standards as expected but they have to sacrifice their "sanity" and "sell their soul to the devil" (according to this junior employee verbatim) and many of the junior employees were having a thought on quitting the job (Martin & LaVan, 2010; Thomas & Meglich, 2019).

Sadly, toxic workplaces exist in lots of organizations and are usually characterised with the aid of a culture of dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics regardless of the attention that human capital is the contributing factor for any corporation's sustainable increase and innovation. Generally, organizational or organization culture is pushed from the top-down method, and if the leadership is not involved about the toxic environment, it could be difficult to shift the tradition. There are numerous strategies to cope with this issue. One among them is for the organisation leaders to show their support to employees by acknowledging their problems at work and providing essential help, particularly for the tasks that have

more stressful requirements (Nguyen et al., 2020; Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020). When the employees have an experience of social support, appreciation, and an effective work surroundings, they carry out better (Haeruddin et al., 2021; Schleu & Hüffmeier, 2021; Wang & Brower, 2019). The employees are agreeing that their fellow employees are nice but it is just that the toxic work culture makes the work environment bad. It means that there is a potential interpersonal bonding could exist inside the organization (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Wang & Brower, 2019). The employees are conflicting in terms of that whether there is scope for development in the organisation or not. It means, due to the fact that there is no proper career advancement opportunity within the organisation it has much less effect on employee performance (Boye & Grönlund, 2018; Schleu & Hüffmeier, 2021).

Furthermore, aspects such as training facilities, financial package deal, effect of rewards and recognitions, secure working situations, and job security will impact the employees' overall performance. To be able to improve the overall performance, organization must effectively communicate and accommodate voices from the employees before decision making in order to create a sense of belongingness and empowerment (Schleu & Hüffmeier, 2021; Yarberrry & Sims, 2021). Also, the management must be able to arrange more training and career improvement programs for enhancing the performance of employees, because most of the employees are not happy with the current financial benefits, the organization has to bear in mind this as a serious problem and attempt to provide extra salaries in line with their years of experience. The organization has to investigate the grievances and complaints of the employees on observable phenomena that are influenced through their emotions and behaviours (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019; Wang & Brower, 2019).

This research contributes to the extant literature by providing new insight on how working environment has a significant role in shaping employees' performance, particularly by showing the impact of a toxic working environment. Also, at the same time, this research answers the gaps mentioned by these studies which urge a call a research on public sector organization (Anjum et al., 2018; Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019; Delmas & Pekovic, 2018; Green, 2021; Rasool et al., 2021). Despite of its contribution, this research has several limitations. Firstly, it is difficult to generalize our findings, as this study was limited to a particular object. Therefore, future research may benefit from wider and comprehensive quantitative approach to generalize the findings while at the same time strengthening the results of the current research. Secondly, this research only focused on the general performance of the employees without looking deeply on employee's personal experiences during their tenure within a toxic working place. Hence, a qualitative research may be needed in the near future in exploring personal experience on how an employee will act during their tenure in a toxic workplace.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it is discovered that the employees' performance level is shaped by the workplace environment, where the negative or toxic workplace environment negatively influence their performance level. Also, management should be able to provide such help in order to minimize the problems caused in the near future. Globally, performance improvement is a major concern of each organization regardless of their scale, characteristics, area, nature, location, and functions. Evidently, a toxic workplace environment essentially shapes the work efficiency and the work burnout. In this way, we concluded that the toxic work environment exacerbates the work burnout level of an employee.

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