

## Divergent thinking Moderates the Effect of Conflict and Employment Stress on Employee Performance

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of conflict and work stress on employee performance at the Roudlotul Ulum Jatirejo Islamic Education Foundation. The research method is quantitative. The data analysis used in the inferential statistical method in this research is partial least squares (PLS). The result of this research were conflict affecting employee performance. This means that higher the conflict, it can affect employee performance. Vice versa, lower the work conflict, but higher the employee's performance. Stress affects employee performance. This means that higher work stress can affect the decrease in employee performance. The results of this study indicate that the work stress that occurs can affect employee performance and vice versa, lower the work stress, and higher the work performance. Divergent thinking mediates conflict in employee performance. However, after this study, divergent thinking weakens the effect of work conflict on employee performance. Work conflicts that often occur are due to differences in perceptions and errors in affection, good communication between employees is needed. Divergent thinking skills strengthen the effect of job stress on employee performance. Employees who have good divergent thinking skills are not easy to experience work stress, because they have creative thinking, can solve problems well, act when pressed without considering the risks that will occur, and can contribute to employee performance.

**Keywords:** *Divergent Thinking Moderates, Employment Stress, Employee Performance*

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## INTRODUCTION

Human resources are an important factor for a company to be successful because people have an important role in every company activity. To achieve company goals, all leaders need to manage their employees to do a good job. One of essential resources is human resources. Human resources are always attached to every company as a determining factor for existence and play a role in contributing towards achieving company goals to advance the company. Human resources are one of the most important elements in an organization. Without quality human resources, an organization will have little chance to survive in the face of existing competition

because essentially the goal of every organization is to achieve and maintain its existence (Waspodo, Handayani, & Paramita, 2013).

The demands of the company must be met by every employee regardless of whether an employee has problems in his family or in the environment where he lives. These regulations, of course, make employees have to do better, but this also causes employees to feel burdened with the company's burdens and targets. In an organization or company regarding changes in the achievement of targets, resulting in higher demands on each employee to further improve their performance. The company, physical conditions, climate, work culture, high demands and company targets cause work stress (Babatunde, 2013) .

Work stress has become one of the most serious problems in the world of health, especially in world of work because there are several reasons, namely stress has harmful physiological and psychological effects on employees. Stress is one of the main causes of employee absenteeism. Stress experienced by one of employees may affect the safety of other employees. In addition, if someone is not aware of work stress, it will result in a job and become one of the causes of suicide (Behestifar & Nazarian, 2013) . The findings show that job stress affects employee performance including ambiguity and role conflict, lack of feedback and promotion opportunities. In addition, it also affects unsatisfactory working conditions, poor interpersonal relationships, feeling a heavy workload and lack of participation in decision making (Shikieri & Musa, 2012) .

Previous research conducted by Bashir & Ramay (2010) stated that job stress is a variable that can affect work performance. The study was conducted on bank employees where the results have a significant effect with a negative correlation between work stress and work performance and show that job stress reduces performance. Furthermore, research conducted by Alil, Nawaz, Raheem, & Imamuddin, (2014) states that role conflict, rewards and workload on employee work results are the main reasons that cause stress to employees, and work stress reduces their efficiency. It is therefore suggested that superiors should minimize stress by reducing workload, paying salaries according to employee performance, reducing role conflicts, providing training and counseling to employees in improving their job performance and job satisfaction.

Other studies have found that job stress has an impact on work performance. Although in this study the results were found to be insignificant (Jamal, 2011) . In line with Manzoor, Awan, & Mariam (2012) states that there is a negative linear relationship to employee work stress and a positive linear relationship to work stress. Furthermore, research conducted by (Julvia, 2016) shows that work stress has a negative influence on employee performance. Manzoor, Awan, & Mariam (2012) to measure job performance and job stress, four relationships have been suggested. When performance decreases with stress, there is a negative linear relationship. A positive linear relationship was also found, when stress led to better performance.

This means that there is a *gap* of research conducted by researchers related to stress on employee performance, the research above shows that the results of work stress are positive and significant and negative with employee performance. Employees who experience work stress can harm the company because of the imbalance between employee productivity and costs incurred to pay salaries, benefits, and other facilities. Many employees do not come to work for various reasons and work is not completed on time, either because of indolence or because of the many repeated mistakes (Hamdani & Handoyo, 2012) . Every employee has a different way

and reaction in dealing with stress. Many employees are disappointed because there is a slight change in the achievement of targets that occur in the company, but there are also employees who remain calm despite the large demands and targets set by the company, especially those who have the confidence and ability to deal with stress (Babatunde, 2013).

Job stress is an individual state in which the awareness or feeling of personal dysfunction as a result of perceived or occurring conditions in the work setting. Work-related stress occurs when there is a mismatch between job demands and the individual worker's resources and abilities to meet the demands (Emmanuel, Bismark, 2014). Some opinions can be concluded that work conflict and stress are a psychological and physical response that arises because of demands and work that are not in accordance with the capabilities of human resources that can affect the emotions of the thinking process and the condition of an employee. In addition, work stress is also one of the factors related to productivity, as well as employee work commitment.

There are two factors that cause or source work stress, namely, work environment factors and personal factors. Work environment factors can be in the form of physical conditions, office management, and social relations in the work environment. Meanwhile, personal factors can be in the form of personality types, events, or personal experiences as well as socio-economic conditions of the family in which the individual is located and develops himself. Although the second factor is not directly related to working conditions, the impact caused by the work is quite large, so personal factors are placed on the source or cause of stress (Margiati, 1999).

Malik, Saleem, & Ahmad, (2010) stated that there was no significant difference in work-life conflicts faced by male and female employees. In line with Jalaluddin et al. (2013) and Choerudin (2016) showed that conflict can act as a complete mediation of the relationship between knowledge and employee performance. Conflict becomes a partial mediation that improves employee performance. Olu et al. (2008) revealed that effective conflict management improves employee performance in an organization and organizational conflict management systems affects employee performance in the organization. Furthermore, the research conducted by Yesi (2017) states that work conflict has a significant and positive effect on employee performance. Chaudry Muhammad, & Ahmad (2011) stated in their research that there is a weak and inverse relationship between work conflict and employee performance.

Each individual has a different way of solving the problems they face. Especially employees in a company also have different ways of thinking as well as those who think divergently. Individuals with divergent ways of thinking are individuals who produce various alternative answers that they think of or combine ways of thinking by linking several decisions. Individuals with divergent thinking have a higher IQ than convergent (Gibson, Folley, & Park, 2009)

The use of divergent thinking as a moderating variable because each individual has a different way of thinking in solving the problems they face. People with divergent thinking are not easily influenced by the ideas initiated by other individuals. Thoughts that have originality because they are different from people's thoughts in general so that when faced with problems, people with divergent thinking are not easily stressed or experience low stress (James, CEA, & Chartrand, 2009). Therefore, this research was conducted so that it can be used as consideration for companies to minimize stress and work conflict in employees related to the thinking skills of employees.

Torrence (in Haqqoh, 2016) suggests that divergent thinking has four aspects, namely: (1) fluency, namely, fluent thinking skills or thinking skills like this can be seen through the ability to spark many ideas, answers, problem solving and can provide many ways or suggestions for doing things. things and always think of more than one answer. (2) flexible thinking skills, which are characterized by the ability to generate various ideas, answers, or statements that vary, can see a problem from different perspectives, look for many alternatives or different directions, and be able to change the approach or way of thinking. (3) original thinking skills, which are characterized by the ability to think to produce new and unique expressions, think of unusual ways to express oneself, and be able to make unusual combinations of parts or elements. (4) thinking skills in detail or elaboration, which is characterized by the ability to enrich and develop an idea or product, add or describe in detail an object, idea, or situation so that it is more interesting.

Work stress is also closely related to emotional and psychological. Such as anxiety and pressure in a study conducted by (Tabrizi, Talib, & Yaacob, 2011) where the study examined the relationship between divergent thinking and anxiety. In this study, there is a significant relationship between a person with divergent thinking skills and anxiety. Where people with divergent thinking abilities are able to deal with anxiety in their own way and need a certain space to think about the solutions they take, resulting in low anxiety. Politicians (2013) also found that there was a significant negative relationship between a person with the ability to diverge in dealing with pressure of work stress. When someone is in a work environment where there is pressure from their superiors, someone who has divergent abilities will feel challenged to complete the tasks assigned by their superiors. In addition, people with the ability to think divergently will give suggestions to themselves that they are able to complete the work assigned by their superiors. Furthermore, they will complete work tasks by thinking about appropriate and efficient ways to complete the assigned task.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, there were several finding problems, namely, the Roudlotul Ulum Jatirejo Islamic Education Foundation, East Java, Indonesia, indeed many employees whose performance has prioritized neatness, thoroughness, but there are still some mistakes in completing work, causing misunderstandings between fellow employees and causing conflicts, namely the occurred in the marketing department of superiors who complained about employee performance, employees whose work was not optimal due to personal problems. In terms of cooperation between employees, it is quite well established, but sometimes there are still disputes due to differences in the quality and quantity of each different employee, causing some employee performance to be less than optimal. Additionally, the lack of communication and individual differences between employees often lead to disputes and conflicts between individuals during working hours that have an impact on the breakdown of cooperation within the company, so this should be a concern to improve employee performance by overcoming the sources of problems that are often faced by employees.

Julvia (2016) which states that work conflict with employee performance was found to have a significant positive effect, which means that the higher the work conflict, the higher the employee performance. This is contrary to Zahid's research (2017) which states that employee performance and organizational conflict have a significant impact on performance of employees in the Bangladeshi banking sector. Thus the research will review the effect of work conflict and work stress on employee performance which is moderated by divergent thinking. From the description above,

several previous studies indicate that there is still controversy, so the author examines the title .

## METHODS

This study uses quantitative research, in this study, the researcher will also examine the effect of variable stress and work conflict as independent variables on employee performance as the dependent variable and divergent thinking as a moderating variable that will mediate the variable stress and work conflict on employee performance. The object of this research is the employees of the Roudlotul Ulum Jatirejo Islamic Education Foundation, East Java, Indonesia, totaling 100 people.

The technique of collecting data with a questionnaire is a data collection technique by providing a list of questions to respondents, with the hope that respondents will respond to the questions contained in the questionnaire. In this questionnaire, a closed question model will be used, namely, the form of questions that have been accompanied by previous alternative answers, so that respondents can choose one of the alternative answers.

In the measurement, each respondent is asked for his opinion on the question, with a rating scale from 1 to 5 (Fitri & Haryanti, 2020). Positive responses (maximum) are given the largest value (5) and negative responses (minimum) are given the smallest value (1). The measurement scale of respondents' perceptions (Likert Scale 1-5), in this study for the convenience of respondents in answering the questionnaire, the rating scale is as follows: Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Hesitate = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5. To avoid misinterpretation of the concepts used in the research variables, the definitions of these variables are as follows:

Table 1. Operational Definition

No	Research Variables	Definition	Indicator	Measurement
1.	Work stress (Veithzal & Ella JS 2010)	Job stress is a condition of tension that creates an imbalance of thought and thought, which affects the emotions, thought processes, and conditions of an employee. (Veithzal & Ella JS 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working conditions</li> <li>• role stress</li> <li>• Interpersonal factors</li> <li>• Career development</li> <li>• Organizational structure</li> <li>• Personal relationship involvement</li> </ul>	likert scale
2.	Work conflict (Flippo, 2003)	Work conflict is a conflict of various types because of the incompatibility of a condition experienced, because of communication barriers, the difference in value and dependence of work activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misscommunication</li> <li>• Goal difference</li> <li>• Differences in judgment or perception</li> <li>• Independence of work activities</li> <li>• Errors in affection.</li> </ul>	likert scale
3.	Divergent thinking (Haqqoh, 2016)	Divergent thinking is thinking to provide various possible answers based on the information provided with an emphasis on quantity, variety, and originality of answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Originality</li> <li>• elaboration</li> </ul>	likert scale
4.	Employee performanc	Employee performance is the result of implementing a job or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quality</li> <li>• quantity</li> </ul>	likert scale

e (Mangkunegara, 2013)	work in quality and quantity from the level of achievement of results from the implementation of certain tasks by an employee in carrying out their duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• responsibility</li> <li>• cooperation</li> <li>• initiative</li> </ul>	
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**Source:** Veithzal & Ella JS (2010), Flippo (2003), Haqqoh (2016), and Mangkunegara (2013)

### Data analysis technique

The data analysis used in the inferential statistical method in this research is partial least squares (PLS). PLS has several advantages compared to other analytical tools, namely: (1) it can analyze complex models, (2) the data does not need to be normally distributed, (3) it can use a small sample and (4) it can handle missing values. This study was analyzed using primary data collected through questionnaires using the survey method. This research questionnaire consisted of questions about variables or constructs measured by a number of indicators. Each respondent was asked to convey his perception of the indicators on these variables by choosing a number from a scale of 1 to 5.

The analytical tool used to test the hypothesis is the *Smart Partial Least Squares (SmartPLS) software version 3.0*. The reason for using *Partial Least Squares (PLS)* is that there are several research hypotheses that do not have a solid theoretical basis. Another reason is that PLS is able to analyze constructs with reflective and formative indicators (Hair et al. ., 2010). PLS is a powerful analytical method , because it is not based on many assumptions, the data does not have to be normally distributed, the sample does not have to be large, and is able to explain the relationship between latent variables (Ghozali, 2011). Another advantage of PLS is that it can be used on data with different scale types, is able to manage multicollinearity problems between independent variables, and the results remain *robust (robust)* even though there are abnormal and missing data (Hartono and Abdillah, 2009). The equation is as follows:

$$Y_1 = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2$$

$$Y_2 = \beta_3 Y_1 + \beta_4 X_1 + \beta_5 X_2$$

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research model uses four constructs , namely, work conflict, job stress, employee performance, and *divergent thinking skills*. PLS model evaluation is done by evaluating the measurement model ( *outer model* ) and structural model ( *inner model* ).

### a. Test Outer Model

Three measurement criteria were used in the data analysis technique using SmartPLS to assess the model. The three measurements are Convergent validity, reliability test (*Composite liability and Chronbach Alpha*), and Discriminant validity.

#### 1) Convergent Validity Test

The indicator is said to be valid if the factor loading value is above 0.5 (Original Sample value), and the probability value (P value) is below 0.05. The results of the second SmartPLS test output, because the first test results contained invalid results, they were deleted:

Table 2. Outer Loadings

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Description
Conflict	X1.1	0.735	Convergent Valid
	X1.2	0.754	Convergent Valid
	X1.3	0.748	Convergent Valid
	X1.4	0.751	Convergent Valid
	X1.5	0.809	Convergent Valid
Work stress	X2.1	0.706	Convergent Valid
	X2.2	0.785	Convergent Valid
	X2.3	0.746	Convergent Valid
	X2.4	0.761	Convergent Valid
	X2.5	0.765	Convergent Valid
	X2.6	0.798	Convergent Valid
Employee performance	Y1.1	0.777	Convergent Valid
	Y1.2	0.781	Convergent Valid
	Y1.3	0.747	Convergent Valid
	Y1.4	0.772	Convergent Valid
	Y1.5	0.745	Convergent Valid
Divergent Thinking Ability	Z1.1	0.829	Convergent Valid
	Z1.2	0.856	Convergent Valid
	Z1.3	0.725	Convergent Valid
	Z1.4	0.747	Convergent Valid

**Source:** Primary Data Processed (2021)

The table above shows the estimated results of the outer loading test calculation using SmartPLS. From the output, it can be seen that all items have a loading factor value above 0.5. With this, the items are valid.

2) Reliability Test (Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value test

a) Reliability Test

Reliability test is a tool to measure a questionnaire which is an indicator of a variable or construct. A measuring instrument or instrument in the form of a questionnaire is said to be able to provide stable or constant measurement results, if the measuring instrument is reliable or reliable. The reliability of the research instrument in this study was tested using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A construct is said to be reliable if the value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha is above 0.70 (Nunnally, 1996 in Ghazali, 2011:43). Meanwhile, according to Widarjono (2015: 278) that the instrument is said to be reliable if the Composite reliability value is 0.6 for exploratory research and Cronbach's alpha 0.6 for exploratory research. The following is the data analysis results from the composite reliability test and Cronbach alpha:

Table 3. Output results of Construct Reliability and Validity

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>rho_A</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</b>
Thinking Divergent	0.799	0.809	0.870	0.626
Employee performance	0.822	0.823	0.876	0.585
Conflict	0.817	0.819	0.872	0.577
Stress	0.854	0.858	0.892	0.579

**Source:** Primary Data Processed (2021)

The test results based on the output above show that the results of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha show a satisfactory value, namely, the value of each variable is above the minimum value of 0,60. This shows the consistency and stability of the instrument used is high. In other words, the constructs or variables of this study have become a fit measuring tool, and the questions used to measure each construct have good reliability.

b) Test value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The AVE value can describe the amount of variance or the diversity of manifest variables that can be contained by the latent construct. For the ideal in the AVE, which is 0.5, this means that the convergent validity is good, meaning that the latent variable can explain the average of more than half the variance of the indicators. The AVE criteria for a valid variable must be above 0.50 (Haryono, 2017:375).

SmartPLS output results can be seen in the output above (look at the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) column).

Table 4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

**Construct Reliability and Validity**

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>rho_A</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</b>
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Employee performance	0.822	0.823	0.876	0.585
Conflict	0.817	0.819	0.872	0.577
Stress	0.854	0.858	0.892	0.579

**Source:** Primary Data Processed (2021)

From the output, it can be seen that 3 variables have an AVE value of more than 0.5, so these variables have good validity.

3) Discriminant Validity Test

*Discriminant Validity* shows that the latent construct predicts whether the construct value is better than other construct values by looking at the construct correlation value on *cross loading*. Several ways to see discriminant validity are:

a) Viewing the value of cross loading

Discriminant validity can be measured by looking at the value of cross loading. If all indicators have a greater correlation coefficient with each



construct than the correlation coefficient value for the indicators in the construct block in the other column, it is concluded that each indicator in the block is a constructor in that column. (Haryono, 2017:421).

Table 5. Cross Loadings

Indicator	Thinking Divergent	Employee performance	Conflict	Stress
Z1.1	0.829	0.743	0.632	0.712
Z1.2	0.856	0.784	0.701	0.789
Z1.3	0.725	0.659	0.597	0.646
Z1.4	0.747	0.635	0.590	0.612
X1.1	0.542	0.575	0.735	0.554
X1.2	0.599	0.599	0.754	0.664
X1.3	0.639	0.633	0.748	0.654
X1.4	0.663	0.675	0.751	0.673
X1.5	0.581	0.666	0.809	0.655
Y1.1	0.677	0.777	0.633	0.721
Y1.2	0.682	0.781	0.657	0.732
Y1.3	0.704	0.747	0.621	0.686
Y1.4	0.721	0.772	0.668	0.718
Y1.5	0.633	0.745	0.594	0.650
X2.1	0.644	0.598	0.546	0.706
X2.2	0.690	0.747	0.714	0.785
X2.3	0.670	0.699	0.598	0.746
X2.4	0.621	0.672	0.685	0.761
X2.5	0.681	0.694	0.657	0.765
X2.6	0.692	0.765	0.642	0.798

**Source:** Primary Data Processed (2021)

From the output above, it can be seen that all indicators have a greater correlation coefficient with each construct compared to the value of the indicator correlation coefficient in the construct block in the other column, so it is concluded that each indicator in the block is a constructor in that column.

b) Comparing AVE. root values

Discriminant Validity is then measured by comparing the AVE root value of each construct with the correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model. If the value of the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than the correlation value between constructs and other constructs in the model, then it has a good discriminant validity value .

Table 6.Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Thinking Divergent	Employee performance	Conflict	Stress
Thinking Divergent	0.791			
Employee performance	0.895	0.765		

Conflict	0.798	0.831	0.760	
Stress	0.876	0.918	0.844	0.761

**Source:** Primary Data Processed (2021)

The AVE root value can be seen in the *Fornell Larcker Criterion column* .

The AVE root value can be seen as follows:

Divergent Thinking : 0,791

Employee Performance : 0,765

Conflict : 0,760

Stress : 0,761

Based on the results above, it can be seen that the AVE root value of each variable is lower than the correlation value between that variable and other variables in the model. With this , it can be said that according to the test on the AVE roots, the model does not have good discriminant validity . and the AVE value has met the requirements, then the PLS SEM analysis is still feasible to continue.

#### b. Inner Model Test

Testing the inner model or structural model in the PLS analysis is carried out using R-square and *Q-Square predictive relevance (Q2)*. The results of the R-square are as follows.

Table 7. R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee performance	0.891	0.885

**Source:** Primary Data Processed (2021)

Based on the output above , it shows that the R-square value of Employee Performance is 0.891 . This means that the variability of the construct of employee performance can be explained by the variability of the constructs of conflict, stress and Divergent Thinking of 89.1 % , while 10.9% is explained by other variables outside the model studied. The larger R-square number indicates, the greater independent variable can explain the dependent variable so that the better the structural equation.

#### 2. Hypothesis Testing (Influence between variables)

In this hypothesis testing stage, it will be analyzed whether there is a significant effect between the independent variables on the dependent variable . Testing the proposed hypothesis is done by looking at the path coefficients which show the parameter coefficients and the statistical significance value of t. The significance of the estimated parameters can provide information about the relationship between research variables . The limit for rejecting and accepting the proposed hypothesis is using a probability of 0.05. The table below presents the estimated output for structural model testing:

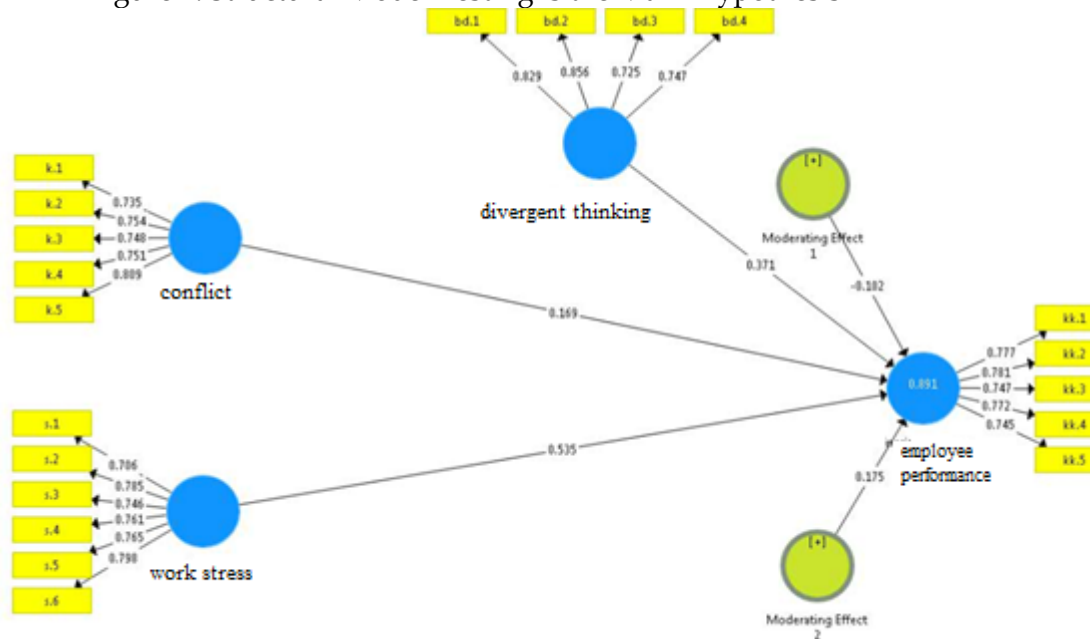
Table 7. Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Divergent Thinking -> Employee Performance	0.371	0.377	0.102	3,648	0.000
Conflict -> Employee Performance	0.169	0.170	0.077	2,189	0.029

Moderating Effect 1 -> Employee Performance	-0.102	-0.111	0.083	1.234	0.218
Moderating Effect 2 -> Employee Performance	0.175	0.186	0.085	2.051	0.041
Stress -> Employee Performance	0.535	0.530	0.098	5,487	0.000

Source: Primary Data Processed (2021)

Figure 1. Structural Model Testing is the Main Hypothesis



Source: Primary Data Processed (2021)

Based on the output in the table and figure above, it can be concluded that:

- Conflict affects employee performance . It can be seen from the Path Coefficient output that the value of  $t_{count} > t_{table}$  ( $2.189 > 1.96$ ) or  $P_{value} < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), so that  $H_0$  is rejected, meaning that the effect is positive, i.e. if the conflict increases, employee performance also increases.
- Stress affects employee performance. It can be seen from the Path Coefficient output that the value of  $t_{count} > t_{table}$  ( $5.487 > 1.96$ ) or  $P_{value} < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), so that  $H_0$  is rejected, meaning that the effect is positive, i.e. if Stress increases, employee performance also increases.
- Divergent Thinking affects Employee Performance. This can be seen from the Path Coefficient output that the value of  $t_{count} < t_{table}$  ( $3.648 > 1.96$ ) or  $P_{value} > 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), so that  $H_0$  is rejected, meaning that the effect is positive, that is, if Thinking Divergent increases then Employee Performance also increases.
- Divergent Thinking is not able to mediate Conflicts on Employee Performance . It can be seen from the Path Coefficient output that the value of  $t_{count} < t_{table}$  ( $1.234 < 1.96$ ) or  $P_{value} > 0.05$  ( $0.218 > 0.05$ ), so  $H_0$  is accepted .
- Divergent Thinking Mediates Stress on Employee Performance . It can be seen from the Path Coefficient output that the value of  $t_{count} > t_{table}$  ( $2.051 > 1.96$ ) or  $P_{value} < 0.05$  ( $0.041 < 0.05$ ) , so  $H_0$  is rejected.

Conflict variable affects employee performance, this means that the higher the conflict increases, the employee performance also increases. Vice versa, lower the work conflict, lower the employee's performance. The results of this study indicate that work conflict affects employee performance. Conflicts that arise are caused by communication problems, personal relationships, and organizational structures. In essence, the conflict also begins when one party is made unhappy by another party about something that the first party considers important. The discrepancy between two or more groups arose from the fact that they have communication errors, differences in goals, differences in judgment or perception, independence in work activities, and errors in affection. Characteristics of respondents based on the sex of men and women are on average the same, namely, 50%. This is possible because they both have good performance during work. The type of age of respondents in this study was mostly at the age of 21-30 years with a total of 30 respondents or a percentage of 30%, respondents aged <20 years, this shows that employees are able to be loyal and stay at this institution even though they often feel stressed at work. while working.

The results of this study are in accordance with Jalaluddin et al. (2013) showed that conflict can act as a complete mediation of the relationship between knowledge and employee performance. Conflict becomes a partial mediation that improves employee performance. Olu et al. (2008) revealed that effective conflict management improves employee performance in an organization and organizational conflict management systems affects employee performance in the organization. Furthermore, the research conducted by Yesi (2017) states that work conflict has a significant and positive effect on employee performance. Chaudry et al. . (2011) stated in their research that there is a weak and inverse relationship between work conflict and employee performance. In contrast to Jamaluddin (2010), which states that conflict in the workplace has a negative impact on employee work outcomes. Subsequent research conducted by Charles and Mary (2013) bad conflict arising from the organization significantly affects employee performance. Donkor Afriyie, & Adjei Danquah, (2015) stated that there is a negative effect of work conflict on employee performance.

Stress variable affects employee performance . This means that higher the work stress, the employee's performance also increases. On the other hand, the lower the constructive work stress, lower the employee's performance. The results of this study indicate that the work stress that occurs can affect employee performance. Work stress is a condition of tension that creates an imbalance of thought and thought, which affects the emotions, thought processes, and conditions of an employee. This is caused by working conditions, role stress, interpersonal factors, career development, organizational structure, and involvement in personal relationships. Characteristics of respondents in this study seen from different levels of education, different years of service, and varying age, levels of employees can trigger work stress, the role that is accepted in the company is not fair and the success of other employees becomes a competitor in performance and structure. overlapping organizations.

The results of this study are in accordance with Manzoor et al. ( 2012) which states that there is a negative linear relationship to employee work stress and there is a positive linear relationship to work stress. Farooq (2010) stated that the results of work stress research have a significant positive effect due to affective factors that arise in individual employees. Furthermore, research conducted by Munawar (2017) shows that work stress has a positive influence on employee performance. Leonora Lalu & Lapien (2016) stated that work stress affects employee performance. Pandey (2020) in his research shows that there is a negative effect of work stress on employee

performance. Ramli, (2019) in his research shows that work stress has a negative and significant effect on employee performance.

The results of this study indicate that *divergent* thinking mediates conflict on employee performance. However, in this study, *divergent* thinking does not strengthen the effect of work conflict on employee performance. Work conflicts that often occur are due to differences in perceptions and errors in affection, so good communication between employees is needed. This is not meaningful considering that *divergent thinking* does not have a significant effect on employee performance.

The results of this study are in accordance with Gibson et al. (2012) show that individuals with divergent ways of thinking are individuals who produce various alternative answers that they think or combine ways of thinking by linking several decisions. Individuals with divergent thinking have a higher IQ than convergent. Anwar & Shahzad (2011) there is an insignificant negative relationship between work conflict and employee performance. Labetubun & Dewi, (2022) the relationship between employee performance and organizational conflict which has a significant impact on employee performance. Thus in the third hypothesis in this study, *divergent* thinking does not strengthen work conflict on employee performance. *Divergent* thinking mediates stress on employee performance. This means that *divergent thinking skills* strengthen the effect of job stress on employee performance. Employees who have good *divergent thinking skills* are not easy to experience work stress, because they have creative thinking, can solve problems well, act when pressed without considering the risks that will occur, and can contribute to employee performance (Haryanti et al., 2022).

The results of this study are consistent with James and Chartrand (2009), people with divergent thinking are not easily influenced by ideas initiated by other individuals. Thoughts that have Originality because they are different from the thinking of people in general so that when faced with problems, people with *Divergent thinking* are not easily stressed or experience low stress. Work stress is also closely related to emotional and psychological. Such as anxiety and stress in a study conducted by Tabrizi et al. (2011) where the research examines the relationship between divergent thinking and anxiety. In this study, there is a significant relationship between a person with divergent thinking ability and anxiety. Where people with *divergent thinking abilities* are able to deal with anxiety in a way, they are alone and need a certain space to think about the solutions they take, resulting in low anxiety. Research conducted by Khery (2013) thinks *divergently* as an open mind and describes speculative thoughts and varied ideas, so that they can manage stress at work. In addition, a study conducted by Politisi (2013) also found that there is a significant negative relationship between a person with divergent ability in dealing with pressure from work stress.

This research is supported by Bashir & Ramay (2010) states that work stress is a variable that can affect work performance. Research conducted on bank employees where the results there is a significant influence with a negative correlation between work stress and work performance and show that work stress reduces performance. Further research conducted by Alil, Nawaz, Raheem, & Imamuddin, (2014) states that role conflicts, rewards and workload on employee deliverables are the main reasons that cause stress to employees, and work stress reduces their efficiency. It is therefore recommended that superiors should minimize stress by lowering workload, paying salaries according to employee performance, easing role conflicts, providing

training and counseling to employees in improving their job performance and job satisfaction.

Work stress has an impact on job performance. Although in this study the results were found to be insignificant (Jamal, 2011). In line with Manzoor, Awan, & Mariam (2012) states that there is a negative linear relationship to employee work stress and there is a positive linear relationship to work stress. Furthermore, research conducted by (Julvia, 2016) shows that work stress has a negative influence on employee performance. Manzoor, Awan, & Mariam (2012) to measure job performance and job stress, four relationships have been suggested. When performance decreases with stress (Chen et al., 2022; García-Moya et al., 2023; Han, 2023), there is a negative linear relationship. A positive linear relationship was also found, when stress led to better performance.

This research has implications for the importance of employee performance influenced by creativity, thinking and work stress. The ability to think divergently amplifies the effect of work stress on employee performance. Employees who have good divergent thinking skills are not easy to experience work stress, because they have creative thinking, can solve problems well, act when pressed without considering the risks that will occur and can contribute to employee performance.

The advice that can be given based on the results of this study is as follows: To improve employee performance by participating in training or doing job rotations, so that employee performance can develop optimally. To improve divergent thinking by providing facilities for employees to increase their creativity, so that they can always solve existing problems. To minimize the occurrence of work conflicts by conducting good communication and giving direction to employees to be flexible and help each other. To reduce work stress that occurs as well as the role received in the company is unnatural and the success of other employees to become performance competitors, by giving fair time in solving problems according to the ability of employees.

## CONCLUSION

Conflict affects employee performance. This means that higher the conflict, higher the work performance. Vice versa, the lower the work conflict, the higher the employee's performance. Stress affects employee performance. This means that higher work stress can affect the decrease in employee performance. The results of this study indicate that the work stress that occurs can affect employee performance. and vice versa, lower the work stress, higher the work performance. *Divergent thinking* mediates conflict in employee performance. However, in this study, *divergent thinking* weakens the effect of work conflict on employee performance. Work conflicts that often occur are due to differences in perceptions and errors in affection, so good communication between employees is needed. This is not meaningful considering that *divergent thinking* does not have a significant effect on employee performance. *Divergent thinking* mediates stress on employee performance. This means that *divergent thinking skills* strengthen the effect of job stress on employee performance. Employees who have good *divergent thinking skills* are not easy to experience work stress, because they have creative thinking, can solve problems well, act when pressed without considering the risks that will occur, and can contribute to employee performance.

The suggestions that can be given based on the results of this study are as follows: To improve employee performance by including training or job rotation, so that employee performance can develop optimally. To improve *divergent thinking* by providing facilities for employees to increase their creativity, so that they can always

solve existing problems. To minimize the occurrence of work conflicts by doing good communication and providing direction to employees to be flexible and help each other. To reduce the work stress that occurs as well as the role received in the company is not fair and the success of other employees becomes a performance competitor, by giving fair time in solving problems according to the ability of employees.

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