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Work-Overload At PT Perusahaan Perumahan Semarang Demak: Causes, Implications And Solutions

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Abstract

This study explores the issue of work overload at PT Pembangunan Perumahan Semarang Demak, focusing on the causes, implications, and potential solutions to this challenge. Using a qualitative research approach, the study aims to provide a deep understanding of the impact of work overload on employee performance and well-being, with an emphasis on identifying effective strategies to manage workloads. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with staff members and employees, participatory observations, and document analysis. The study identifies several key factors contributing to work overload, including insufficient human resources, unclear task distribution, and inefficient systems. The findings highlight that work overload leads to negative implications such as decreased productivity, increased stress, and lower employee satisfaction. Additionally, the study suggests practical solutions such as clearer task distribution, flexible scheduling, improved communication, and the use of time management tools like to-do lists. The study contributes to the understanding of work overload in the context of large-scale construction projects and offers recommendations that could be applied to enhance employee well-being and project performance at PT PP Semarang Demak.

Keywords: Work overload, Causes Work Overload, Implication Work Overload, workload solutions, PT Pembangunan Perumahan Semarang Demak.

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INTRODUCTION

PT PP (Persero) Tbk is recognized as one of Indonesia's foremost construction companies, significantly contributing to the nation's infrastructure acceleration efforts. Among its current large-scale undertakings is the Semarang-Demak toll road project, categorized under the National Strategic Project (PSN). This infrastructure initiative is expected to enhance both economic growth and public mobility. However, it also encounters substantial challenges related to timely, efficient, and high-quality delivery. Research shows that work overload is a widespread problem in construction projects, leading to reduced worker productivity and increased stress. According to the study "Work Overload in Construction: Causes and Consequences," excessive workloads can negatively affect both individual performance and overall project outcomes (Smith et al., 2021). This insight serves as a foundation for exploring the specific workload-related challenges in the Semarang-Demak toll road project.

Given the project's large scale and complexity, the construction team often experiences significant workload pressure. Work overload occurs when the volume of tasks and responsibilities surpasses the team's capacity in terms of time, labor, and resources. Within the Semarang-Demak project, this issue may arise due to strict deadlines, insufficient manpower, abrupt plan modifications, and the constant pressure to meet demanding targets. As emphasized in "Factors Influencing Work Overload in Construction Projects," workload issues stem from both internal and external sources (Johnson & Lee, 2020). Internally, inefficient task allocation and weak project management systems contribute to overload, while external influences such as supply chain disruptions and changing regulations further intensify the situation. This complex context underscores the unique difficulties faced by PT PP in managing workloads on this project.

The consequences of work overload are substantial, impacting both individuals and the overall success of the project. On a personal level, overloaded workers often experience stress, fatigue, and demotivation, which in turn lowers productivity and diminishes work quality. Poorly managed workload may also result in increased mistakes, project delays, and additional operational costs. This is supported by research such as "The Impact of Work Overload on Employee Performance in Construction," which indicates that excessive workloads contribute to higher error rates, extended project timelines, and a decline in overall quality (Thompson, 2019). Such findings highlight the urgent need for effective workload management in ensuring the timely and successful execution of the Semarang-Demak toll road.

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To mitigate these issues, a comprehensive approach is necessary—one that fully understands the underlying causes and implications of work overload. Potential solutions include improving workload distribution, leveraging technology for efficiency, enhancing team coordination, and fostering work-life balance. Relevant literature, such as "Strategies for Reducing Work Overload in Project Management," offers practical guidance, recommending better resource allocation, stronger communication frameworks, and the adoption of digital tools to streamline work processes (Garcia & Patel, 2022). Applying these recommendations directly to the Semarang-Demak context can strengthen the project's ability to manage workload challenges effectively.

This study aims to identify the root causes of work overload, assess its effects on employee welfare and project performance, and propose applicable solutions tailored to the environment of PT PP's Semarang-Demak project. In doing so, the research contributes to improved project efficiency and supports worker well-being. Managing workload effectively is essential for ensuring project success and maintaining a healthy work environment. As highlighted in recent studies on workload management (Nguyen et al., 2023), such insights are vital to optimizing performance in large-scale infrastructure efforts. Additionally, qualitative evidence, including interviews and project documentation, emphasizes the urgency of addressing this issue. Further studies such as Morrow (2020) that center on employee experiences in infrastructure projects enrich the understanding of how work overload manifests and impacts morale and productivity. Ultimately, resolving these challenges is essential for the success of this critical national project.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work Overload

According to Nurhasanah (2022), workload refers to a collection of tasks or activities that must be completed within a given timeframe, emphasizing the necessity of timely completion, while Nabawi (2019) defines it as a process undertaken by an individual to fulfill job-related duties under normal conditions within a certain period, all linked to specific performance indicators. Similarly, workload can also be described as the average frequency of job-related activities over a certain timeframe, implying that it encompasses a set of duties that must be fulfilled within a specific duration. Masriati (2018) notes that everyone is likely to encounter an excessive workload (work overload) at some point, which arises when external demands surpass an individual's capabilities. Mahfudz (2017) adds that in industrial settings, excessive workload is characterized by job demands that exceed normal limits in terms of speed, output, and concentration,

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making it a significant source of occupational stress. Therefore, based on these definitions, excessive workload can be understood as a collection of tasks assigned to workers within a set timeframe that demands abilities beyond their capacity, often exceeding the usual scope of duties and requiring extra effort and energy.

Types of Work Overload

Work overload is defined as the inability to complete tasks within the designated timeframe, potentially disrupting both social and personal life (Kirch, 2008). It may result not only from an excessive number of tasks but also from mistakes at work, poor time management, or organizational issues (Daniels, 2017). Additionally, Daniels (2017) emphasizes that work overload can occur when individuals are subjected to workloads above normal levels. Kirch (2008) further describes work overload as a condition in which job demands surpass the individual's capacity—either in time or available resources—to meet those demands. This concept is further classified into quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Quantitative overload occurs when individuals face too many tasks within a limited period, often leading to errors and health deterioration due to time pressure, a critical factor in efficiency standards like the common saying "fast and safe" (Damayanti et al., 2021). Qualitative overload, in contrast, arises when the work assigned exceeds an individual's capability or when the performance standards are too demanding (Suyatno, 2020).

Suyatno et al. (2020) explain that qualitative overload increasingly shifts the focus of work toward mental tasks, with job complexity escalating due to growing volumes of information, more advanced skills required, and expanded alternatives in work processes. Such complexity often demands technical and intellectual abilities beyond what an individual possesses, and when it reaches an excessive level, it turns counterproductive, potentially triggering mental exhaustion along with emotional and physical symptoms. Supporting this, Peter et al. (2001) categorize work overload into two distinct types: quantitative overload, which involves a high number of tasks, and qualitative overload, which encompasses tasks that are excessively difficult. Therefore, excessive workload can be understood through these two perspectives, with quantitative overload stressing the volume of work and qualitative overload emphasizing the difficulty or complexity of the tasks at hand.

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Causes of Work Overload

According to Gibson (2009) in the research of Riny Chandra F (2017), several factors contribute to work overload, including time pressure, work schedules, role ambiguity and conflict, noise, information overload, repetitive tasks, and responsibility. Time pressure emerges when deadlines and urgency lead to mistakes or a decline in health, as the stress of limited time hampers concentration and decision-making abilities. Likewise, long or poorly structured working hours can contribute to fatigue and disrupt work-life balance, creating stress among employees. Role ambiguity, where employees are unsure of their responsibilities, and role conflict, where contradictory expectations are imposed, also contribute to confusion and work-related stress. Additionally, noise disrupts concentration, leading to reduced task performance and even health problems. Information overload further increases the cognitive burden on workers, causing stress and impairing decision-making. Moreover, repetitive physical actions contribute to boredom and mental fatigue, while heavy responsibility, especially without adequate support, can create pressure and stress, especially when individuals feel solely accountable for complex tasks.

Soleman (2011) explains that workload is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors stem from within the employee and include physical aspects like perception, motivation, desire, beliefs, and satisfaction, along with somatic elements such as age, gender, body size, health status, and nutrition. External factors, on the other hand, involve the work organization—including work systems, shift schedules, and rest periods—as well as the broader work environment, which includes physical, biological, and psychological conditions that can increase workload. Furthermore, job tasks themselves, whether mental (involving emotional labor, responsibility, and complexity) or physical (involving posture, workspace, and load handling), also contribute significantly to perceived workload levels. These combined factors explain how various elements interact to impact an employee's ability to manage their duties effectively.

Workers in sectors such as public services and industry frequently encounter high demands for productivity and quality within constrained timelines, resulting in elevated workload levels. Sinsky et al. (2022) found that such excessive workloads adversely affect not only productivity but also lead to fatigue, stress, and burnout, all of which contribute to reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover. This, in turn, can harm overall organizational performance. To address this, Taylor et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of social and managerial support in the workplace. Building supportive relationships among colleagues and receiving emotional and practical support from

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management can help alleviate stress and enhance collaboration. When employees feel supported and encouraged to express their challenges, they are more likely to engage in collective problem-solving, which improves communication, reduces individual burdens, and contributes to better team and organizational outcomes.

Implication of Work Overload

In the context of human resource management at PP Semarang Demak, addressing work overload and role ambiguity is crucial for maintaining employee well-being and performance. Research indicates that when employees are burdened with excessive workloads and unclear roles, their stress levels increase, which can lead to reduced productivity and higher absenteeism. As highlighted by Sinsky et al. (2022), "high workload not only affects productivity but can also lead to stress, fatigue, and burnout." This psychological strain can result in elevated turnover rates and diminished job satisfaction. To prevent these outcomes, management must take proactive steps in identifying and resolving the underlying causes of stress and workload imbalance.

One effective way to reduce work overload is through strategic workload management, such as task prioritization and flexible work arrangements. Prioritizing tasks allows employees to approach their duties more systematically, helping reduce the chaos of multiple demands. Lee and Ashforth (2021) argue that "clear prioritization can help employees feel more organized and reduce feelings of being overwhelmed." Moreover, flexible working hours can support a better work-life balance, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2023). Similarly, open communication between employees and management is essential, as it allows employees to express concerns and discuss realistic expectations, which can significantly prevent the onset of burnout (Sari & Arif, 2021). In this vein, stress can also be managed using both problem-focused coping—such as reorganizing task priorities—and emotion-focused coping—such as mindfulness practices (Puspaningtyas, 2020).

Beyond structural solutions, emotional and social support play a vital role in mitigating the effects of work overload. Kahn and Byosiere (2020) emphasize that "social support from colleagues and management can serve as a buffer against stress and enhance job satisfaction." Tools like the Eisenhower Matrix can help employees better navigate their tasks by distinguishing between urgent and non-urgent work, leading to improved efficiency and reduced stress (Covey, 2021). A positive organizational culture—where management provides support and fosters open dialogue—further strengthens employee resilience. Taylor et al. (2023) reinforce this by stating that when

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employees feel supported by their superiors, it enhances collaboration, reduces stress, and improves organizational performance. Consequently, companies that prioritize employee well-being are more likely to achieve higher levels of loyalty, satisfaction, and productivity (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2022).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Leite et al. (2024) investigate the challenges of work overload among healthcare professionals in Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study identifies that female workers and individuals with limited field mobility experienced higher levels of overload, emphasizing how personal and contextual factors influence job stress. It stresses the urgent need for enhanced health policies and managerial support to protect employees operating in high-stress environments like healthcare. In a related context, Orianhoi & Ginting (2025) explore the link between work overload, job stress, and turnover intentions among Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Their findings reveal that "work overload significantly influences job stress, which in turn impacts turnover intentions," underlining the importance of managing workload to improve employee retention. Similarly, Sumaryono (2022) highlights how physical environmental factors such as poor lighting, uncomfortable temperatures, and noise contribute significantly to workload and employee fatigue. The study concludes that companies must improve workplace conditions to reduce stress and maintain productivity.

In terms of psychosocial and technological influences, Quezada Díaz et al. (2024) examine the perceptions of work overload among Mexican university students and faculty during remote learning in the COVID-19 era. The study found that increased home-based work contributed to more tasks, frequent interruptions, and difficulties balancing professional and personal responsibilities. It also noted that "university students reported more work overload than faculty," likely due to added domestic and caregiving burdens. Complementing this, Rasool et al. (2022) explore the concept of technology overload, identifying constant digital interruptions, multitasking, and the pressure of being always connected as major contributors to stress. Their findings emphasize the value of "self-efficacy training, time management, and organizational regulations" to mitigate these effects. Arnold et al. (2023) further investigate information overload, showing that the continuous flow of digital information leads to cognitive strain and lower productivity. This overload, intensified by the pandemic, calls for better work design and structured information flow to reduce mental fatigue.

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Efforts to resolve the problem of work overload have been addressed in various studies. Kelly & Moen (2020) focus on IT professionals, revealing how persistent pressure to remain "always on" results in burnout and physical health issues. Their five-year study proposes work redesign as a solution, involving clearer schedules, well-defined goals, and supportive leadership. In the education sector, Fatima et al. (2022) show that faculty members experiencing work overload suffer from reduced harmonious passion, which negatively affects their career resilience. Their longitudinal study in Pakistan underscores how excessive workloads can erode long-term professional development. Finally, Moen et al. (2013) provide insight into how high-status professionals deal with time pressures, introducing the idea of "time work"—strategies like time blocking, obligation shifting, and prioritization to cope with intense work demands. These strategies highlight the critical role of time management and organizational support in mitigating the adverse effects of work overload.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

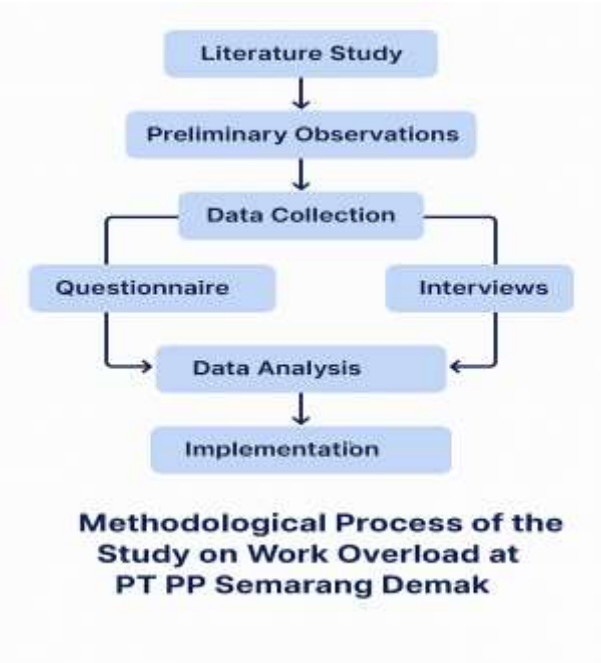


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

This study aims to identify the causes, impacts, and solutions of work overload at PT PP Semarang Demak. It began with a literature review, followed by preliminary observations to understand employee challenges. Data were then collected through

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questionnaires and interviews, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Based on the findings, practical solutions such as task reallocation, technology use, time management training, and leadership support were implemented. The goal is to provide effective recommendations to reduce workload, enhance work-life balance, and improve overall efficiency.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative case study approach to deeply explore the causes, effects, and solutions to work overload among employees at PT PP Semarang-Demak. Qualitative methods are chosen to gain nuanced insights into subjective employee experiences and the organizational context, emphasizing understanding over generalization. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with selected staff from operations, procurement, and finance, chosen via purposive sampling to ensure informed perspectives. Additional data were collected through direct observation during a four-month internship, as well as document analysis of job descriptions, overtime records, and performance reports. These methods allowed the researcher to identify core issues, such as task distribution inefficiencies and insufficient support systems, while also highlighting opportunities for improvement like better time management, use of technology, and leadership development.

To ensure data credibility, the study employed triangulation by cross-verifying interview findings with observations and document analysis. Thematic analysis was used to interpret data through steps such as transcription, coding, and theme development. The research process was iterative and responsive, allowing for continuous refinement of findings and solutions. The final outcomes include context-specific recommendations aimed at reducing work overload and enhancing employee performance and well-being. These insights are compiled in a final internship report and are intended to guide organizational interventions at PT PP Semarang-Demak to improve work-life balance and operational effectiveness.

RESULTS

During a four-month internship at PT Pembangunan Perumahan Semarang Demak (Persero) Tbk, the author conducted a comprehensive study by observing project activities and engaging in administrative responsibilities. Working six days a week for forty-eight hours, the author identified a recurring issue of work overload among employees, which had notable effects on their performance and well-being. This

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observation led to the development of recommendations related to workload management and employee support. The research process was aided by guidance from supervisors and interviews with project personnel, although challenges such as adapting to the project management system and limited time for direct field observation posed obstacles. The findings were categorized into five key areas: Causes of Work Overload, Impact on Employee Well-Being, Workload Management Strategies, Employee Support Systems, and Performance Improvement Recommendations.

The causes of work overload at PT PP Semarang Demak, as identified through interviews, are multifaceted. According to Ms. Heni, “work overload occurs when the work and responsibilities assigned exceed the individual’s capacity and job description,” emphasizing the lack of clarity in task delegation. This often results in willing individuals taking on more than their fair share, leading to dissatisfaction. Mr. Rahmad supported this view by pointing out that “the limited number of human resources to handle additional workloads is a primary cause of work overload.” Mr. Imam also highlighted that “inefficient systems or processes, as well as a lack of coordination between departments, also contribute to the increasing workload.” All sources agreed that peak periods, such as month-end or audits, worsen the situation, highlighting systemic organizational issues that demand management's immediate attention.

The implications of this overload are severe, affecting not only individual performance but the overall team and organizational climate. Ms. Heni noted that overwhelming workloads diminish motivation and productivity, particularly during high-pressure periods. Mr. Rahmad observed that the mental and physical toll of overwork leads to stress, fatigue, and behavioral changes that negatively affect the workplace atmosphere. Mr. Imam added that, “this condition can also lead to more frequent errors in work, as individuals who are overloaded tend to find it difficult to concentrate.” In response, several solutions were proposed, including clearer task distribution, better human resource allocation during peak times, and the use of to-do lists to prioritize tasks. Cultivating a supportive work culture and providing training in time and stress management were also emphasized. These recommendations aim to mitigate the effects of work overload and promote a healthier, more effective work environment.

Table 1. Interview Results (Causes of Work Overload)

What do you think are the main factors causing work overload at PP Semarang Demak?

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N1	N2	N3
"In my opinion, when the division of tasks is unclear, for example, if one or two tasks are assigned to person A or B without knowledge about those tasks, they end up being given to someone who is capable and willing to do them."	"I believe that one of the main root causes of this work overload is the limited human resources available to handle each additional workload. This is reinforced by observations in the field, where the existing team often has to struggle to meet all project demands with limited resources."	"In my opinion, there are several factors. First, the limited number of finance staff compared to the volume of work that needs to be completed. Second, inefficient systems or processes that take longer to complete tasks. Third, a lack of coordination between departments, which causes information to often be delayed or inaccurate."

Table 2. Interview Results (Implication of Work Overload)

How often do you feel overwhelmed by the tasks assigned to you? Are there specific periods when you often feel overwhelmed?		
N1	**N2**	**N3**
"There is one phase, and it definitely has an impact; I often find myself questioning why I am the one who keeps getting assigned tasks while others do not. This mostly affects my working hours, which keep increasing."	"Yes, I feel overwhelmed during the deadline around the middle of the month or during procurement in the third and fourth quarters when I have to handle procurement administration for each unit."	"Quite often, especially towards the end of the month or the end of the year, when there are many reports that need to be completed. Additionally, during audits or tax inspections, my workload also increases drastically."

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Table 3. Strategy of Work Overload

What steps do you usually take to cope with work overload? Are there any specific strategies that you find effective?		
N1	**N2**	**N3**
"Personally, I always make a to-do list, and honestly, I prioritize external tasks over internal ones because they become the main priority. When I feel overloaded, my manager advises me to ask for help from the JMTO team."	"Well, first, to cope with work overload, I usually create a to-do list for that day to divide/plan the tasks I can complete. Second, I take a break during my rest time without using gadgets to relieve stress. Lastly, I chat and joke with my coworkers during breaks to avoid gadgets and give my eyes a rest from staring at the laptop."	"Usually, I make a list of prioritized tasks and try to complete the most important ones first. I also try to ask for help from coworkers if possible. Additionally, I make an effort to maintain my health by exercising and getting enough rest, even though it's difficult to do when I'm experiencing work overload."

DISCUSSION

Based on interviews with employees at PP Semarang Demak, it was found that the issue of work overload arises from a combination of factors rather than a single cause. The most dominant factor is the shortage of human resources, which leads to employees being assigned tasks that exceed their capabilities and job descriptions. In addition, ineffective coordination in task distribution further contributes to the problem, resulting in an uneven distribution of workloads. These findings are consistent with the research of Kahn et al. (2021), who argue that excessive workload can lead to stress and fatigue, thereby endangering mental health. Similarly, Lee and Ashforth (2022) highlight how a lack of social support and unclear task allocation aggravate work overload, leading to lower productivity and job satisfaction.

The consequences of work overload at PP Semarang Demak are significantly reflected in employee performance, particularly during critical periods such as month-end or quarterly reporting and audit inspections. During these times, employees experience a marked increase in workload, which results in longer working hours and heightened

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pressure. This condition aligns with the findings of Sonnentag and Fritz (2020), who state that overload leads to fatigue, ultimately reducing work quality and productivity. Furthermore, Tuckey et al. (2021) point out that constant work pressure can disturb work-life balance and reduce motivation, a pattern that mirrors the experiences shared by the employees interviewed at PP Semarang Demak.

In response to these challenges, employees at PP Semarang Demak have adopted various self-management strategies to mitigate the effects of work overload. One of the most commonly practiced methods is creating a structured to-do list, which helps in organizing and prioritizing tasks efficiently. In addition, employees utilize their break times for social interaction with coworkers to maintain mental well-being and reduce dependency on gadgets. Although maintaining a healthy lifestyle through exercise and rest is often difficult during high workload periods, many employees strive to uphold these habits. These strategies correspond with the research by Macan (2021), who demonstrated that to-do lists enhance time management and productivity, and Korpelainen et al. (2022), who emphasized the role of workplace social interaction in reducing stress.

Moreover, Rebar et al. (2020) found that regular physical activity and sufficient rest are essential in maintaining mental and physical health, especially in the face of heavy workloads. The efforts taken by employees at PP Semarang Demak reflect these findings, as they show a conscious attempt to preserve their well-being despite the challenges posed by excessive work demands. Collectively, both the interview results and supporting research highlight that while work overload presents serious risks, strategic self-regulation and supportive work environments can play a critical role in reducing its negative impact on employee performance and well-being.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted at PT Pembangunan Perumahan Semarang Demak, it can be concluded that work overload is primarily caused by inadequate human resources, poor time management, uneven task distribution, and high demands from superiors and clients. These factors significantly affect employee well-being, leading to decreased productivity, increased stress, absenteeism, high turnover, and reduced work quality and customer satisfaction. To mitigate these issues, the implementation of project management technology, flexible scheduling, improved communication, and supportive work policies is essential in fostering a healthier, more balanced, and productive work environment.

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RECOMMENDATION

To effectively mitigate work overload at PT Pembangunan Perumahan Semarang Demak, it is recommended that the company increase staffing levels to evenly distribute workloads and reduce employee pressure, while also investing in training and development to enhance workforce capabilities. Improving time management through targeted training and implementing task prioritization systems can help employees manage responsibilities more efficiently. Moreover, conducting regular evaluations of task distribution and using project management tools will ensure a more balanced allocation of duties. Encouraging open communication between management and staff, alongside implementing wellness programs, can foster a supportive work culture and address stress-related issues early. Lastly, by routinely assessing workload and employee satisfaction and adjusting policies based on feedback, the organization can create a healthier and more productive work environment.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the recommendations, conclusions, and limitations of the study, the managerial implications highlight the urgent need for PT Pembangunan Perumahan Semarang Demak to implement strategic improvements in workload distribution, human resource allocation, and communication systems. Managers should prioritize hiring additional staff and investing in employee training to enhance both efficiency and morale. Furthermore, establishing clear task assignments, promoting time management practices, and utilizing project management tools can significantly reduce work overload and improve productivity. Open communication between management and staff, combined with regular evaluations of workload and employee satisfaction, will foster a supportive work environment. By addressing these areas, the company can enhance organizational performance, reduce employee stress, and promote long-term sustainability.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that may influence the validity of the findings. One key constraint lies in the timing of interviews, which were conducted during working hours, potentially affecting the depth and quality of the responses; future research should consider scheduling interviews outside of work hours to enhance response effectiveness. Additionally, the lack of readily available data required the researcher to rely heavily on observations for developing interview questions and questionnaires, which may have

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limited the scope of the analysis—thus, securing relevant data prior to interviews is recommended for future studies. Lastly, since this research employed a qualitative approach, it did not produce quantifiable results regarding the impact of work overload; therefore, future research is encouraged to incorporate quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of employee discipline and performance.

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