

Employee Perception of the Environment in the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the importance of the work environment in supporting the implementation of employee duties in public sector organizations. A conducive work environment can create comfort, increase work motivation, and support the achievement of organizational goals. This study aims to describe the perception of employees about the work environment in the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province from the perspective of the physical work environment and the non-physical work environment. The research uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive method. The research population amounted to 168 employees with a sample of 127 employees determined using *stratified proportional random sampling techniques*. Data was collected through a Likert scale questionnaire that met the requirements for validity and reliability, then analyzed using descriptive statistics through the calculation of mean values. The results showed that employees' perception of the work environment was in the good category with an overall average score of 4.33. The aspect of the non-physical work environment obtained an average score of 4.38, higher than the aspect of the physical work environment which obtained an average score of 4.27. In the aspect of the physical work environment, the lighting indicator obtained the highest average value of 4.42, while the sound or noise indicator obtained the lowest average value of 4.02. In the aspect of the non-physical work environment, the leader-employee relationship indicator obtained the highest average score of 4.41, while the work culture indicator obtained the lowest average score of 4.36. These findings show that the work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province has been able to create comfortable, harmonious, and conducive working conditions for employees in carrying out their duties. Therefore, the organization needs to maintain the quality of the work environment that has been good and continue to make improvements in aspects that still need attention to support the improvement of employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human resources are strategic assets that play an important role in determining the success of the organization in achieving the goals that have been set. The success of the organization is not only influenced by the availability of facilities and infrastructure, but also by the organization's ability to create working conditions that support the implementation of employee duties effectively and efficiently (Hasibuan, 2017).

In public sector organizations, the quality of human resources is an important factor because it is directly related to the quality of services provided to the community (Wiyono et al., 2025). Therefore, efforts to create a conducive work environment need to be the main concern of every organization.

The work environment is everything that is around the employee and can affect the implementation of work. According to Sedarmayanti (2017), the work environment consists of a physical work environment and a non-physical work environment. The physical work environment includes conditions that can be directly felt by employees, such as lighting, air temperature, and noise. Meanwhile, the non-physical work environment includes relationships between employees, relationships between leaders and employees, and a work culture that develops within the organization. A conducive work environment can increase employee comfort, motivation, and productivity, while a less supportive work environment has the potential to reduce work morale and the effectiveness of task implementation (Nugroho, 2023).

In addition to the conditions of the work environment, employees' perception of the work environment is also an important factor that needs to be considered. Perception is an individual process in receiving, organizing, and interpreting information obtained from the environment so as to form a certain understanding of an object or situation (Walgito, 2019). A positive perception of the work environment can encourage the formation of job satisfaction, work motivation, and higher organizational commitment (Holid, 2024). On the contrary, negative perceptions can cause job dissatisfaction and hinder the achievement of organizational goals (Luthans, 2021). Therefore, employee perception can be used as an indicator to assess the quality of the work environment in an organization.

Various studies show that the work environment has a close relationship with employee behavior and performance. Nabawi research (2019) shows that the work environment has a positive effect on employee performance. Other studies have also found that a good work environment can improve job satisfaction, work motivation, and employee productivity. However, most previous research has focused more on the influence of the work environment on other variables, such as performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. Research that specifically describes employees' perceptions of the work environment, especially in government agencies within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, is still relatively limited. This condition shows the need to obtain an empirical picture of how employees view the work environment they experience on a daily basis.

Based on initial observations made by researchers during the implementation of the Field Practice of Education Management (PLMP) at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province, several phenomena related to the work environment were found. From the physical aspect, there are still suboptimal air circulation conditions, uneven lighting in the workspace, and noise that has the potential to disturb employee concentration. From a non-physical aspect, it was found that there was cooperation between employees that was not optimal, communication between leaders and employees that had not run effectively, and work behavior that showed that the implementation of a discipline culture in the organizational environment was not strong. This phenomenon indicates that the quality of the work environment needs attention because it can affect the perception of employees in carrying out their work.

To obtain more objective information about these conditions, research is needed that is able to describe employees' perceptions of the existing work environment. Through measuring employee perceptions of aspects of the physical work environment which include lighting, air temperature, and sound or noise as well as aspects of the non-physical work environment which include relationships between employees, leaders-employee relationships, and work culture, organizations can obtain useful inputs as a basis for evaluating and improving the work environment (Ovyana, 2025). The results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of education administration studies, especially those related to human resource management in public sector organizations.

Based on this description, this study aims to describe the perception of employees about the work environment in the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province reviewed from physical and non-physical aspects. This research is important to provide empirical evidence regarding employees' perceptions of the work environment in the regional office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province and to be considered for organizations in formulating policies that support the improvement of the work environment.

2. METHOD, DATA, ANALYSIS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive method. This approach was chosen because the study aims to describe employees' perceptions of the work environment in the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province based on empirical data obtained through measurements using questionnaires. The quantitative descriptive method allows researchers to obtain an

objective picture of the conditions of the work environment perceived by employees without manipulating the research variables.

The research population consists of all employees of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province which totals 168 people and is spread across several sections and fields of work. The research sample amounted to 119 employees who were determined using the stratified proportional random sampling technique. This technique is used because the population consists of several working groups that have different characteristics so that each group has a proportionate opportunity to become a research sample. The determination of the number of samples is carried out at an error rate of 5% so that the sample obtained is considered to be able to represent the characteristics of the population.

The research data was collected using a closed questionnaire with a five-level Likert scale, namely strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), disagree (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). The research instruments were prepared based on indicators of the physical work environment and the non-physical work environment. Aspects of the physical work environment include lighting, air temperature, and sound or noise, while aspects of the non-physical work environment include relationships between employees, leader-employee relationships, and work culture.

Before being used in the study, the instrument was first tested for validity and reliability on 30 respondents outside the study sample using the help of IBM SPSS Statistics 26 for Windows. The validity test was carried out using Pearson's Product Moment correlation technique to determine the level of accuracy of each statement item in measuring the research variable. With a significance level of 5%, a table r value of 0.361 was obtained. The test results showed that all 39 statement items had a calculated r value greater than the r of the table (0.361), so that all items were declared valid and suitable for use as research instruments.

Next, reliability tests are performed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to measure the consistency level of the instrument. The test results showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.974 with a total of 39 items. This value exceeds the minimum limit of 0.60, so the instrument is declared to have a very high level of reliability. Thus, the research instrument is declared valid and reliable and suitable for use as a data collection tool in research on employees' perceptions of the work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province.

The research data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents. Next, the data is analyzed by calculating the average value (mean) of each indicator. According to Tajudin (2010), the interpretation of quantitative data can be done by grouping the average score into certain categories so that it is easier to interpret the results of the research. Based on the scale range used, the assessment categories consist of.

Table 1. Rating Scale

No	Mean Score	Categories
1.	4,6 – 5,0	Excellent
2.	3,6 – 4,5	Good
3.	2,6 – 3,5	Pretty Good
4.	1,6 – 2,5	Not Good
5.	1,0 – 1,5	Not Good

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the research on employee perceptions of the work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to 127 employees as research respondents. The work environment in this study consists of two aspects, namely the physical work environment and the non-physical work environment. Aspects of the physical work environment are measured through lighting, air temperature, and sound/noise indicators, while aspects of the non-physical work environment are measured through indicators of relationships between employees, leaders-employee relationships, and work culture. The data from the research were analyzed using descriptive statistics through the calculation of mean values.

The following is presented the results of the analysis of employee perception data about the work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province.

Table 2. Work Environment Research Results

Aspects	Indicator	Average Score	Categories
Physical Work Environment	Lighting	4,42	Good
	Air Temperature	4,38	Good
	Sound/Noise	4,02	Good
Average		4,27	Good
Non-Physical Work Environment	Employee Relations	4,37	Good
	Leadership and employee relations	4,41	Good
	Work Culture	4,36	Good
Average		4,38	Good
Overall average		4,33	Good

Based on Table 2, an overall average score of 4.33 was obtained in the good category. This shows that the work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province is in the good category. The aspect of the non-physical work environment obtained a higher average score of 4.38 compared to the physical work environment which obtained an average score of 4.27.

In the aspect of the physical work environment, an average score of 4.27 was obtained with the good category. The lighting indicator obtained the highest average value of 4.42, while the sound/noise indicator obtained the lowest average value of 4.02. These results show that lighting conditions and air temperature have supported employee comfort at work. However, the sound or noise aspect still needs attention so that the comfort of the work environment can be further improved.

The lighting indicator obtained an average score of 4.42 with a good category. These results show that the available lighting has helped employees to carry out their work comfortably and effectively. The item with the highest score was the statement "Lighting in the workspace helps employees see clearly" with an average score of 4.59.

The air temperature indicator obtained an average value of 4.38 with a good category. This shows that the air temperature conditions in the work environment have provided comfort for employees in carrying out their duties. The availability of air conditioning, air ventilation, and room design is considered to have supported the creation of a comfortable working atmosphere.

Furthermore, the noise/noise indicator obtained an average score of 4.02 in the good category. These results show that noise conditions in the work environment are still at a level acceptable to employees. However, this indicator has the lowest average value compared to other indicators, so it still needs attention to improve employee work comfort.

In the aspect of the non-physical work environment, an average score of 4.38 was obtained with a good category. The leader-employee relationship indicator obtained the highest average score of 4.41, while the work culture indicator obtained the lowest average score of 4.36. These results show that social relationships and work interactions in the office environment have been going well.

The indicator of the relationship between employees obtained an average score of 4.37 in the good category. These results show that employees have harmonious working relationships, respect each other, and are able to work well together in completing tasks. The item with the highest score was found in the statement "The working atmosphere between employees feels familiar and comfortable" with an average score of 4.49.

The indicator of the relationship between leaders and employees obtained an average score of 4.41 with a good category. This shows that communication and interaction between leaders and employees have taken place positively. Employees feel given the opportunity to express their opinions and get clear direction from the leadership in carrying out their work.

Meanwhile, the work culture indicator obtained an average score of 4.36 in the good category. These results show that employees have a good level of discipline, responsibility, and compliance with regulations in carrying out their work. The item with the highest score was found in the statement "Employees complete work tasks responsibly" with an average score of 4.39.

In general, the results of the study show that the work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province has been in the good category. This condition can be seen from the physical work environment that supports the comfort of employees and the non-physical work environment which is characterized by harmonious working relationships and a positive work culture so that it can support the optimal implementation of employee duties.

Discussion

Physical Work Environment

The results showed that the physical work environment obtained an average score of 4.27 with a good category. The lighting indicator received the highest score (4.42), followed by air temperature (4.38), while sound or noise received the lowest score (4.02). Nevertheless, all indicators are still in the good category.

The high score on the lighting indicator shows that the lighting conditions in the work environment have been able to support the visual comfort of employees in carrying out work. Adequate lighting helps employees see the work object clearly, reducing eye strain and minimizing work errors. This finding is in line with the opinion of Sedarmayanti (2017) who stated that lighting is one of the factors in the physical work environment that affects the comfort and productivity of employees. This finding is also supported by Ibid and Wallace (2015) who explain that good lighting allows employees to see work objects clearly so that they can increase comfort and effectiveness at work. In addition, Riyadi (2018) stated that adequate lighting quality is one of the important elements in creating a safe and comfortable work environment for employees.

In addition, the air temperature indicator also received a good rating. Comfortable air temperature conditions indicate that facilities such as air conditioning, air ventilation, and building design have supported the creation of a conducive working environment. According to Sedarmayanti (2011), the appropriate air temperature will help employees maintain concentration and comfort during work. On the other hand, air temperatures that are too hot or too cold can reduce the effectiveness of employees' work. This is in line with the opinion of Sutrisno (2019) who stated that comfortable work environment conditions can increase employee morale and productivity. Sunyoto (2015) also explained that the comfort of the physical work environment, including air temperature, plays an important role in improving the performance and quality of employee work results.

Despite being in the good category, the sound or noise indicator obtained the lowest score compared to other physical indicators. These findings suggest that the noise control aspect still needs more attention. Sudaryo et al. (2022) explained that noise is an unwanted noise and can interfere with concentration, communication, and work comfort. This opinion is strengthened by Setiawan (2014) who stated that high noise levels can reduce work comfort and hinder employees' concentration in completing work. In addition, Munandar (2014) explained that work environment conditions that cause psychological disturbances, including noise, can affect work effectiveness and employee welfare. Therefore, organizations need to continue to improve noise control efforts through workspace arrangements, the use of sound suppression materials, and the management of noise sources both from inside and outside the office.

Overall, the results of the study show that the physical work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province has been able to create comfortable working conditions and support the implementation of employee duties. Good physical condition is one of the important factors in increasing work effectiveness and productivity. This finding is in line with Hasibuan (2017) who stated that a good work environment can encourage employees to work more effectively and efficiently. In addition, Lase (2021) also found that a conducive work environment has a positive effect on the implementation of duties and employee performance. Thus, a good physical work environment is one of the important factors in supporting the optimal achievement of organizational goals.

Non-Physical Work Environment

The results showed that the non-physical work environment obtained an average score of 4.38 with a good category. The indicator of leader-employee relationship obtained the highest score (4.41), followed by the relationship between employees (4.37) and work culture (4.36). These results show that social interactions and work relationships within the organization have been going well.

The high score on the leader-employee relationship indicator shows that communication and interaction between leaders and employees are taking place positively. Employees feel given the opportunity to express their opinions, get clear directions, and get support from the leadership in carrying out their work. These findings are in line with Achyar et al., (2019) Explains that communication is a transactional and symbolic process that allows individuals to build relationships through the exchange of information so as to create a deeper understanding between the parties interacting. And Robbins and Judge (2017) who stated that effective communication between leaders and subordinates plays an important role in creating harmonious working relationships and improving organizational performance. This finding is also supported by Pragita (2021) who explains that effective communication in an organization can improve understanding, cooperation, and the quality of working relationships between members of the organization.

The indicator of the relationship between employees also received a good assessment. This shows an attitude of mutual respect, cooperation, openness, and trust between employees. According to Ermita (2016), harmonious relationships between employees can create a comfortable working atmosphere and support the creation of a conducive work environment. Good relationships between employees also make it easier to coordinate and complete work together. These results are in line with Yunita and Hasan (2023) who stated that good working relationships between employees can increase the effectiveness of teamwork and support the achievement of organizational goals.

Furthermore, the work culture indicator obtained an average score of 4.36 and was in the good category. These findings show that employees have applied the values of discipline, responsibility, and compliance with the rules in carrying out their work. The results of this study support the opinion of Hasibuan (2024) who states that work culture is a value and habit that guides the behavior of organizational members in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. A positive work culture will encourage the creation of a productive work environment oriented towards achieving organizational goals. This finding is also supported by Sari and Putra (2021) who explain that a positive organizational culture is able to form good work behavior and improve the psychological well-being of employees.

Overall, the non-physical work environment scored higher than the physical work environment. These findings show that the quality of social relations, organizational communication, and work culture are the main forces in creating a conducive work environment in the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province. This condition can be an important capital for organizations in improving performance and quality of services to the community. This is in line with Luthans (2021) who states that a positive work environment can affect the attitude, motivation, and work behavior of employees in the organization.

Based on the results of this research and discussion, it can be understood that a good work environment is not only determined by the physical condition of the workplace, but also by the quality of social relationships established within the organization. The combination of a comfortable physical work environment and a harmonious non-physical work environment will create a work atmosphere that supports productivity, job satisfaction, and the effective achievement of organizational goals.

Thus, the results of the study show that employees' perception of the work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province is in the good category with an average score of 4.33. These findings indicate that the conditions of the work environment, both from physical and non-physical aspects, have been able to support the optimal implementation of employee duties. A good work environment can create a sense of comfort, increase work motivation, and support the achievement of organizational goals.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that employees' perception of the work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province was in the good category with an average score of 4.33. These findings show that the work environment that includes physical and non-physical aspects has been able to support the optimal implementation of employee duties. In the aspect of the physical work environment, the lighting indicator obtained the highest score, while the sound or noise indicator obtained the lowest score even though it was still in the good category. Meanwhile, in the aspect of the non-physical work environment, the indicator of the relationship between leaders and employees obtained the highest score, followed by the relationship between employees and work culture which was also in the good category. Thus, it can be concluded that the work environment at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province has created comfortable, harmonious, and conducive working conditions for employees in carrying out their work.

Based on the results of the research, it is recommended to the leadership of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra Province to maintain the quality of the work environment that has been in the good category and to conduct periodic evaluations of aspects of the physical and non-physical work environment. Special attention needs to be paid to the aspect of sound or noise that obtains the lowest score compared to other indicators, through improved sound suppression facilities and a more comfortable workspace layout. In addition, efforts to strengthen work culture, increase concern between employees, and provide a more optimal appreciation for employee performance need to continue to be carried out in order to create a work environment that is more conducive and supports the improvement of organizational performance.

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