

# Analysis of the Effect of Work Flexibility and Work Stress on Remote Worker Performance Mediated by Work Motivation

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## ARTICLE INFO

### JEL Classification:

J24, M54, O15

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**Received:** 22-04-2024

**Revised:** 09-05-2024

**Accepted:** 28-05-2024

**Published:** 14-06-2024

### Keywords:

Work Flexibility, Work Stress,  
Work Motivation, Remote  
Worker Employee Performance



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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to obtain empirical evidence regarding the influence of work flexibility, work stress and work motivation on the performance of Remote Worker employees in XX Malang City. Also to obtain empirical evidence regarding the influence of work flexibility and work stress mediated by work motivation on the performance of Remote Worker employees in XX Malang City. And finally, this research also aims to obtain empirical evidence regarding the influence of work flexibility and work stress on the work motivation of Remote Worker employees in XX Malang City. The population in this study were Remote Workers totaling 80 people in XX Malang City. Because this is a census research, the number of samples taken is as large as the existing population, namely 80 Remote Worker employees in XX Malang City. The data analysis method uses descriptive statistics and verification analysis using a variance-based Structural Equation Model or called Partial Least Square (PLS), which consists of validity tests, reliability tests and hypothesis testing techniques. The research results show that work flexibility, work stress and work motivation have a significant and positive effect on employee performance in XX Malang City. Work flexibility and work stress have a significant effect on performance which is mediated by full work motivation (full mediation). Work flexibility and work stress have a significant effect on work motivation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has become a phenomenon that can affect industries in Indonesia, be it trade, manufacturing or services. This situation requires the industry to continue to innovate in order to compete and achieve excellence in quality and quantity, both products and services. To maintain competitiveness and maintain high quality, it must be realized that the performance role of the workforce as a driver of industrial activities is very important. The emergence of the internet and various kinds of information technology can support communication and have an impact on the work system. One of the real impacts is the emergence of a new work system called the Remote Working System. In the Asian region, less than 9% of companies do not allow their employees to work remotely (Hartley and Jarvis, 2020). There is already a special website

www.remote.co, which has information about remote work, including remote job vacancies.

In 2011, market research institute Ipsos conducted a study on the frequency of remote work by employees. The survey was conducted in 24 countries, including Indonesia, and a total of approximately 500 respondents answered the survey in Indonesia. According to the survey results, the proportion of remote workers in Indonesia is 71% (around 355 people) and 16% of them work from home every day and 22% report working from home once a week (Ipsos, 2011). Indonesians currently have experience working remotely during the Covid-19 virus outbreak, as this work system is an alternative solution chosen by the Indonesian government to prevent the spread of the virus. Around 974 companies in Indonesia implemented work from home for their employees after an increase in the number of patients infected with Covid-19 (Jelita, 2020). Currently, the culture of remote workers has been widely encountered in many cities in Indonesia, because it has advantages in the form of work flexibility which includes working hours and places to carry out work, and has the advantage of reducing company expenses (Stead and Bibby, 2017).

Based on the results of preliminary research conducted by the researcher by conducting interviews with several employees at XX company in Malang City that implemented the remote working system, several speakers felt an increase in satisfaction and happiness with their performance, which included flexibility with the explanation that because the implementation of remote work will make it easier for employees to manage their time and places to choose. Indirectly, this will reduce work stress because there is more time for family or time to generate other income, so that it can motivate employees to work, but some speakers feel the opposite. This is also supported by the performance assessment data of company XX in Malang City Quarter 2/2023 (April – June), the results of the performance assessment of several employees of company XX in Malang City fluctuated with an average value of 2.3; 1.67; and 3.17 with an average total score of 5.0.

**Table 1.** Performance Assessment

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>June 2023</b>	<b>July 2023</b>	<b>Agustus 2023</b>
Quality of Work	2.43	1.73	3.34
Quantity of Work	3.3	2.47	3.62
Working Hours	1.8	1.3	2.82
Work Effectiveness	1.67	1.2	2.9
Work Initiatives	2.5	1.5	3.2
Work Commitment	2.1	1.8	2.8
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>3.17</b>

Source : Company XX Personnel processed by researchers

The positive response that has been given by several employees of XX Malang City company is in line with several previous studies, such as Schall research (2019), that the flexibility of working remotely can improve employee performance, then Amin & Anjum

(2016) also explained that work flexibility has been proven to have an impact on employee performance.

Furthermore, research from Amritha, Ramana, & Reddy (2017) concluded that good work flexibility will be beneficial to help employees, one of which is being able to control working hours more freely so that it does not interfere with personal life, and employee performance in the company can improve. There is also a negative response from some employees, because lately work demands to exceed the hours they should work. If this continues, it can have an impact on decreasing performance. In addition to the problem of work flexibility, work stress also affects performance, as evidenced by research from Sandoval et al (2021) that work stress can affect the performance of remote workers due to the accumulation of work.

Motivation is often associated with employee performance. Providing work motivation both from leaders and colleagues is very important to foster a feeling to work harder, especially if motivation grows in oneself, this actually has a great effect on performance to be more optimal. Employees who have high work motivation will provide more optimal performance, compared to employees with low work motivation which will cause the possibility of not being enthusiastic at work and declining performance. This is in line with previous research that work motivation has a strong influence on employee performance (Abdullah & Winarno, 2022) Furthermore, Rietveld et al (2021) explained that training can improve employee development because they feel cared for, it can improve the performance of employees in a company.

Furthermore, if the work flexibility of the company has a good value on the condition that each work is completed on time, so that it can reduce work stress supported by the three variables that have been explained earlier. Therefore, the reason why the variable of work motivation can be a mediator between work flexibility, work stress, and performance is because if the motivation is able to improve performance, it is reviewed from one of the factors, namely salary and work responsibilities, related to deadlines and time management.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1) Employee Performance**

Performance is the result of an employee's work in the workplace (Sultan et al., 2021). Performance is a manifestation of employee work attitude, where superior performance is driven by motivation, stable work flexibility and work stress. According to Rismawati and Mattalata (2018), performance is a condition that must be known and confirmed to certain parties to find out the level of achievement of the results of an agency that is linked to the vision carried out by the company and to know the positive and negative impacts of an operational policy.

### **2) Work Flexibility**

Flexibility according to Carlson et al. (2010) is a formal policy set by company management. Furthermore, Carlson defines work flexibility as a flexible work arrangement which means choosing a place and time to work, either formal or

informal, that facilitates employees in a company. Work flexibility also means the strategy carried out by the company to retain workers or better known as Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) or what is currently better known as remote workers. Work flexibility is given as a form of variety when working, so that employees do not feel bored to improve performance or reduce work stress (Ferdous, Ali, M., and French, 2021).

### **3) Work Stress**

Work stress occurs as a result of an imbalance between the demands and resources that individuals have. The higher the gap occurs, the higher the stress experienced by the individual. Work stress is a condition of human interaction with work, in the form of tension that creates physical and psychological imbalances, which affect the emotions, thought processes, and condition of an employee (Asih et al., 2018). According to Budiasa (2021), work stress is a form of response or response to pressure at work caused by a situation of incompatibility between a person and his environment, thus affecting the physical, mental and behavior of individuals at work. Work-related stress arises when the demands and pressures of work are not in accordance with their abilities and knowledge (Budiasa, 2021).

### **4) Work Motivation**

Work motivation according to Andika (2019) is one of the things that can affect human behavior. Work motivation is also known as a driver or need that can make a person excited and motivated to increase their own motivation, even leading to an optimal direction in work. Work motivation according to Dryselius, A. and Pettersson, J. (2021) is the provision of motivation where it creates a person's enthusiasm for work so that they want to work together effectively to achieve satisfaction. Another meaning, according to Sunyoto (2018), motivation talks about how to encourage an employee's morale to work by providing their abilities and even expertise optimally to achieve the goals that the company wants to achieve.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

In this study, the approach used by the researcher is quantitative research and uses statistical formulas to help analyze the data and facts obtained. The object of research is something that is a concern in a research. The object of this research is the target of the research to get answers or solutions to the problems that occur. The object of this study is the influence of work flexibility and work stress on employee performance mediated by work motivation, with the subject of the study being Remote Workers at Company XX Malang City.

The population in this study is Remote Workers totaling 80 people in Company XX Malang City. This study uses a census taking technique or known as saturated sampling (Sugiyono, 2017). The sample in this study is Remote Workers of Company XX Malang City and totals 80 people.

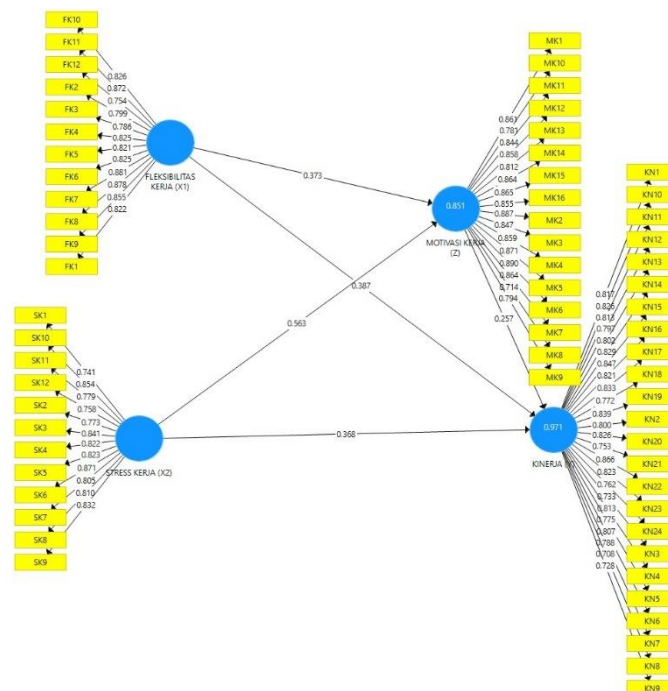
In this case, the quantitative data needed is data from respondents in the form of scores from questionnaire answers to the variables studied. The data used in this study are primary data and secondary data.

Data collection to support this research was carried out by questionnaire method. The research instrument used in this study is in the form of a questionnaire or questionnaire made by the researcher himself. The methods or methods used to analyze and interpret the data are descriptive statistical analysis and verifiable analysis using the variance-based Structural Equation Model or called Partial Least Square (PLS). PLS consists of validity test, reliability test and hypothesis testing technique.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### Results

The convergent validity of the measurement model with reflective indicators can be seen from the correlation between the score item and the construction score. Individual indicators are considered reliable if they have a correlation value above 0.70. However, in the research stage of scale development, loading 0.50 to 0.60 is still acceptable (Ghozali, 2014). Based on the result for outer loading, all indicators have a loading above 0.60 and significant.



**Figure 1. Outer Model**

From the results of data processing with SmartPLS shown in Figure 1, the majority of items in each variable in this study have a loading factor value greater than 0.70 and are said to be valid.

The value of discriminant validity can be known through other methods, namely by looking at the average variant extracted (AVE) value, which for each indicator is required

to have a value of  $>0.5$  for a good model (Ghozali, 2014). The AVE values for each construct can be shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

<b>Variable</b>	<b>AVE</b>
Work Flexibility (X1)	0.688
Work Stress (X2)	0.656
Motivasi Kerja (Z)	0.710
Employee Performance (Y)	0.640

Source: Questionnaire data processed, 2023

Based on the data presented in Table 2 above, it is known that the AVE values of the variables Work Flexibility (X1), Work Stress (X2), Work Motivation (Z), and Employee Performance (Y) variables  $>0.5$ . Thus, it can be stated that each variable has good discriminant validity.

Composite reliability is the part used to test the reliability value of indicators on a variable. A variable can be declared to meet composite reliability if it has a composite reliability value of  $>0.6$  (Ghozali, 2014). The following Table 3 is the composite reliability value of each variable used in this study.

**Table 3.** Composite Reliability

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>
Work Flexibility (X1)	0.964
Work Stress (x2)	0.958
Motivasi Kerja (Z)	0.975
Employee Performance (Y)	0.977

Source: Questionnaire data processed, 2023

Based on the data presentation in Table 3, it can be seen that the composite reliability value of all research variables is  $>0.6$ . These results show that each variable has met the composite reliability so that it can be concluded that all variables have a high level of reliability.

The reliability test with composite reliability can be strengthened by using the cronbach alpha value. A variable can be declared reliable or meet the cronbach alpha if it has a cronbach alpha value of  $>0.7$  (Ghozali, 2014).

**Table 4.** Cronbach's Alpha

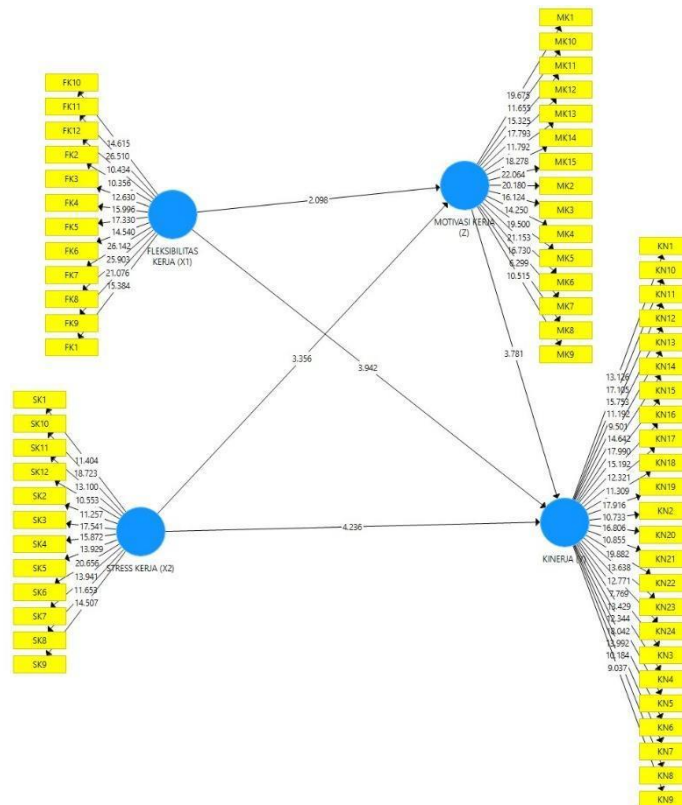
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Work Flexibility (X1)	0.959
Work Stress (x2)	0.952
Motivasi Kerja (Z)	0.973
Employee Performance (Y)	0.975

Source: Questionnaire data processed, 2023

Based on the data presentation in Table 4 above, it can be seen that the cronbach alpha value of each of the research variables is  $>0.7$ . Thus, these results can show that

each of the research variables has met the requirements of the Cronbach alpha value, so it can be concluded that the entire variable has a high level of reliability.

Inferential statistical analysis in this study uses Partial Least Square (PLS). The following is an overview of the path analysis in the inner model generated after running the SmartPLS program for all inter-construct relationships in Figure 2 below:



**Figure 2. Inner Model**

The testing of the structural model (inner model) can be seen from the R-Square value for each endogenous variable as the predictive power of the structural model. Changes in the R-Square value can be used to explain the influence of certain exogenous latent variables on endogenous latent variables. According to Ghozali (2014), the R-Square results of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 indicate that the model is "good", "moderate", and "weak". Based on the results of testing using the SmartPLS program, the following results were obtained:

**Tabel 5. R-Square**

<b>Variable endogenation</b>	<b>R-Square</b>
Motivasi Kerja (Z)	0.851
Employee Performance (Y)	0.971

Source: Questionnaire data processed, 2022

In the table above, it can be seen that the R-Square value of the endogenous latent variable of Work Motivation (Z) obtained is 0.851 or 85.1%. The results show that Work Flexibility (X1) and Work Stress (X2) have an influence of 85.1% on Work Motivation (Z), while the remaining 14.9% (1-R-Square) is a large contribution of influence given by

other factors that are not studied. The Work Motivation (Z) variable in this study has an R-Square value of 0.851, and based on the criteria mentioned by Ghozali earlier, that the Work Motivation (Z) model influenced by the Work Flexibility (X1) and Work Stress (X2) variables indicates a good model, because it exceeds the number of 0.67. Furthermore, the endogenous latent variable of Performance (Y) obtained was 0.971 or 97.1%. The results show that Work Flexibility (X1), Work Stress (X2) and Work Motivation (Z) together have an influence of 97.1% on Performance (Y), while as much as (1-R-Square) the remaining 2.9% is the contribution of influence given by other factors that were not studied. The Performance Variable (Y) in this study has an R-Square value of 0.971, and based on the criteria mentioned by Ghozali earlier, that the Performance (Y) model influenced by the variables of Work Flexibility (X1), Work Stress (X2) and Work Motivation (Z) indicates a good model, because it exceeds the number of 0.67.

The hypothesis test in this study was carried out by looking at the values of p-Values and t-Statistics. The research hypothesis (H1) can be declared acceptable if the p-Values < 0.05 or t-Statistics is greater than 1.96 (t-Statistics > 1.96) (Yamin & Kurniawan, 2011). The following are the results of hypothesis tests obtained in this study through path coefficients on the SmartPLS output below:

**Table 6.** Path Coefficients

Path	Original Sample	t-Statistics	P-Values	Conclusion
WORKING FLEXIBILITY (X1) → PERFORMANCE (Y)	0.387	3.579	0.000	Accepted
WORK STRESS (X2) → PERFORMANCE (Y)	0.368	4.543	0.000	Accepted
WORK MOTIVATION (Z) → PERFORMANCE (Y)	0.257	3.868	0.000	Accepted
WORK FLEXIBILITY (X1) → WORK MOTIVATION (Z) → PERFORMANCE (Y)	0.096	2.151	0.016	Accepted
WORK STRESS (X2) → WORK MOTIVATION (Z) → PERFORMANCE (Y)	0.145	2.528	0.006	Accepted
WORK FLEXIBILITY (X1) → WORK MOTIVATION (Z)	0.373	2.257	0.012	Accepted
STRESS KERJA (X2) → MOTIVASI KERJA (Z)	0.368	3.161	0.001	Accepted

Source: Questionnaire data processed, 2023

## Discussion

### 1) The Effect of Work Flexibility on Performance

The results of hypothesis 1 test are in accordance with the results of research by Ramana, & Reddy (2017), Alexander, A., De Smet, A., Langstaff, M., and Ravid, D. (2021), Anjum & Amin. (2016), Ferdous, T., Ali, M., & French, E. (2021), which showed that there

was a significant influence between work flexibility and employee performance. Work flexibility usually allows for more working hours, so it can encourage employees to take the initiative or come up with creative ideas to complete activities, as well as be responsible for their work, compared to relying on directions from superiors (Maifanda & Slamet, 2019). Work flexibility will improve employee performance at company XX in Malang City because it can control working hours more freely so that it does not interfere with personal life, and employee performance in the company can increase. This is in accordance with the opinion of Hubler (2020) who stated that if work flexibility has a good value, performance will also get better, and conversely, if the flexibility value is not good, performance can also decrease.

## **2) The Effect of Work Stress on Performance**

The results of hypothesis 2 test show that work stress has a significant effect on performance in employees of company XX in Malang City. The results of the hypothesis 2 test are inversely proportional to the results of the research of Hassan, et al. (2020), Aryanta et al. (2019) and Subha et al. (2021) which showed that work stress has a positive and significant effect on performance. This can happen because the work given to employees is piling up (Sandoval et al., 2021). Then if high work stress coupled with low work flexibility will cause the performance of a company to decrease. However, remote workers at XX company in Malang City can overcome stress if they work outdoors and are aware of completing work according to deadlines. Remote workers at XX company in Malang City are aware of the work responsibilities given to them and can support their performance by doing easy tasks first, doing tasks efficiently, and can also prioritize their work. Because of the sense of responsibility and also with the existence of supporting things from the company such as flexibility in working hours, workplace, as well as incentives provided by company XX, although the work stress owned by employees is high, one of which is because of the tasks received too much, the performance provided by remote workers of company XX is also high. This information is in accordance with research that explains that work stress can be influenced by the excess work portion that has been set by the company, but if the motivation of employees is good, it will improve performance in the company (Subha et al., (2021)). This is in line with the results of interviews with several respondents who stated that although their work stress is high due to the workload given by the company, it actually makes the performance of XX company employees also high because of their sense of responsibility for the tasks that have been given.

## **3) The Effect of Work Motivation on Performance**

The results of hypothesis 3 test show that work motivation has a significant effect on the performance of employees of company XX in Malang City. The results of the hypothesis 3 test are in accordance with the results of the research by Rietveld et al. (2021), which stated that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on performance. Employees who have high work motivation will provide more optimal performance, compared to employees with low work motivation which will cause the

possibility of not being enthusiastic at work and declining performance. This is in line with previous research that work motivation has a strong influence on employee performance (Abdullah & Winarno, 2022). Then the employees of company XX in Malang City feel that the salary and incentives given are in accordance with their performance. This is in accordance with research from Hassan, M. (2020) who explained that motivation in the form of salary and interpersonal attention can reduce employee stress and improve performance.

#### **4) Effect of Work Flexibility on Work Motivation-Mediated Performance**

The results of hypothesis 4 test show that work flexibility has a significant effect on performance mediated by work motivation in employees of XX company in Malang City. The results of hypothesis 4 test are in accordance with the results of research by Sultana et al (2021), Awit, N. T., & Marticio, R. M. (2022) and Saputro, Bairizki & Hidayat, S. (2021) who concluded that work flexibility has a positive and significant effect on performance mediated by work motivation. The high work flexibility possessed by employees of company XX in Malang City will result in high employee performance, because the work environment in the form of a place or working time has been adjusted to the wishes of the employees themselves. Coupled with motivation such as good communication between employees as well as salaries and incentives provided by the company can make the performance results of XX company employees in Malang City high. Thus, it can be said that work motivation plays a role in mediating the influence of work flexibility on employee performance.

#### **5) Effect of Work Stress on Work Motivation-Mediated Performance**

The results of the hypothesis 5 test are in accordance with the results of the research of Idris & Khan (2020) and Palumbo et al, (2022) which concluded that work stress has a positive and significant effect on performance mediated by work motivation. For remote workers of XX company who have high work stress, the company can overcome this by having work motivation as a support for employee performance. The motivation provided by company XX is to provide incentives and also appropriate salaries. Communication between employees or with superiors can also increase work motivation for employees. These things make high work motivation which results in increased employee performance. Employees of XX company in Malang City realize that the increase in the quantity of work provided by the company is an assessment of their performance for a promotion or reward. The work culture at XX company in Malang City like this makes their performance high when they have high work stress because of a motivation in the form of rewards or promotions. Thus, it can be said that work motivation plays a role in mediating the influence of work stress on employee performance.

#### **6) The Effect of Work Flexibility on Work Motivation**

The results of hypothesis 6 test show that work flexibility has a significant effect on work motivation in employees of company XX in Malang City. The results of hypothesis 6

test are in accordance with the results of research by Davidescu et al (2020) and Sever, Suzana Ivan Malbašić (2019) which show that work flexibility has a positive and significant effect on work motivation. Work flexibility is directly related to work motivation, if a person feels happy and happy when working flexibly, it will affect their motivation at work which will improve performance. This is in accordance with the opinions of Klindžić, and M. Marić. (2019) that an employee with a high level of work flexibility tends to be able to provide good performance for the company because the work environment has been adjusted to the employee's own desires. Company XX in Malang City uses a work system in the form of a remote, where this system makes workers have high work flexibility with the choice of workplace and working hours that can be adjusted by remote workers of company XX in Malang City, where this work flexibility is one of the motivations for employees to improve their performance because the work environment has been adjusted to what they want.

### **7) The Effect of Work Stress on Work Motivation**

The results of hypothesis test 7 show that work stress has a significant effect on work motivation in employees of company XX in Malang City. The results of the hypothesis 7 test are not in accordance with the results of the research of Chauhan et al. (2019), which show that work stress has a positive and significant effect on work motivation. Adamovic, M. (2022) in his research explained that high work stress will affect employee motivation and performance in a company. Remote workers at company XX in Malang City have high work motivation, this can be seen because employees of company XX have received salaries and incentives that they think are appropriate or even more that have been given by the company. The high work stress owned by employees of XX company in Malang City can be mediated by high work motivation, this makes the performance of XX company employees in Malang City increase. Then Subha and Thomas, A. (2021) explained that work stress can be influenced by the excess work portion that has been set by the company and low motivation at work so that employee performance can decrease. Remote workers at XX company in Malang City consider what they have gotten from the company such as salaries and incentives to be in accordance with the tasks given. In addition, research by Dryselius, A. and Pettersson, J. (2021) concluded that motivation from both colleagues and superiors has a good impact on the performance of employees who have high work stress. Although the work stress of remote workers of XX company in Malang City is high, this can be mediated by high work motivation as well, and will improve the performance of employees.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, the researcher reached a conclusion that the work flexibility provided by company XX in Malang City can affect the performance results of its employees. With an environmental situation that has been adjusted to the employee's wishes, in the form of a workplace and working time, it can improve the performance of the employee. The work stress owned by remote workers of company XX in Malang City affects employee performance, because employees of

company XX in Malang City have a high level of work stress but employees also have high performance results. Motivation also affects employee performance. It can be seen that company XX in Malang City provides motivation in the form of salaries and incentives which according to its employees are very suitable for their work so that this can increase the performance of the employees themselves. Apart from the motivation of the company, the motivation of the work environment can also support the performance of XX company employees in Malang City.

The existence of a Remote Working System at XX company in Malang City where it is inseparable from work flexibility, employees can choose and adjust the environment they want to do their work. Starting from the place, time, and how long they do this work activity, they can adjust it as they please. With high work flexibility, this also supports employee performance at XX company in Malang City to be high. Coupled with the motivation provided by the XX company in Malang City to all its employees, the level of employee performance is increasing. In company XX in Malang City, the motivation that has been received by employees in the form of salaries, incentives, and interpersonal communication also with work flexibility can improve employee performance.

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