



The Effect of Workplace Romance on Employee Performance with Job Stress and Employee Engagement as Mediating Variables and Job Tenure as a Moderating Variable

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of workplace romance on employee performance, with job stress and employee engagement as mediating variables and job tenure as a moderating variable in the context of a mining company (PT. X). This research was motivated by inconsistent findings regarding the impact of workplace romance on employee outcomes, particularly in high-risk industrial environments. A quantitative explanatory design was employed using a survey method involving 390 employees who had experienced or were currently involved in workplace romantic relationships. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess direct, indirect, and moderating relationships among variables. The results indicate that workplace romance has a significant positive effect on employee performance, job stress, and employee engagement. Both job stress and employee engagement significantly influence employee performance and serve as mediating variables in the relationship between workplace romance and employee performance. Employee engagement emerged as the stronger mediating pathway. However, job tenure did not significantly moderate the relationship between workplace romance and employee performance. These findings suggest that workplace romance may contribute positively to employee performance when supported by strong engagement and manageable stress levels, offering new insights into relationship dynamics in organizational settings.

Keywords: Workplace Romance; Employee Performance; Job Stress; Employee Engagement; Job Tenure; PLS-SEM

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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a critical determinant of organizational success, particularly in industries that demand high levels of precision, safety, and coordination. Performance is commonly understood as the extent to which employees achieve work outcomes in terms of quality and quantity in accordance with organizational expectations (Mangkunegara, 2017). It reflects not only task accomplishment but also the behavioral contributions of individuals toward organizational effectiveness (Motowidlo, 2003). In this sense, employee performance represents a multidimensional construct shaped by both individual capabilities and contextual factors within the workplace.

Previous studies suggest that employee performance is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, including motivation, ability, and work environment conditions (Robbins & Judge, 2019). The interaction between these factors determines whether employees can perform optimally in achieving organizational goals. Recent evidence also highlights that performance outcomes are strongly affected by the availability of organizational support and the balance between job demands and resources (Bakker et al., 2023). When employees lack adequate support or face excessive work pressures, performance tends to decline, both at individual and team levels.

In high-risk industries such as mining, employee performance becomes even more critical due to its direct implications for operational safety and productivity. Work environments characterized by high workload, strict safety standards, and physically demanding conditions often expose employees to psychological strain. Job stress, defined as the condition arising when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), has been consistently

identified as a major factor that undermines performance. Empirical findings indicate that higher levels of stress are associated with reduced productivity, impaired concentration, and lower quality of work output (Zhang et al., 2023; Ari, 2025). Moreover, prolonged exposure to stress can also negatively affect employees' physical and mental well-being, leading to absenteeism and reduced efficiency (Cooper, 2019).

Beyond stress, employee engagement plays an essential role in shaping performance outcomes. Engagement refers to a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Engaged employees tend to demonstrate higher motivation, stronger commitment, and greater willingness to contribute beyond formal job requirements. Prior research shows that engagement is positively associated with job satisfaction and performance improvement, particularly in supportive organizational environments (Musevenzo et al., 2024; Madhumitha & Asrafi, 2025). Therefore, maintaining high levels of engagement is essential for sustaining productivity and organizational effectiveness.

However, workplace dynamics are not solely determined by structural and psychological factors such as stress and engagement. Interpersonal relationships, particularly workplace romance, may also influence employee behavior and performance. Workplace romance refers to consensual romantic relationships between employees within an organizational setting, which may involve emotional and sometimes physical intimacy (Pierce & Aguinis, 2009). While such relationships may provide emotional support and increase job involvement in certain cases, they can also introduce social complexity, including perceptions of favoritism, gossip, and role conflict (Harris, 2006).

The impact of workplace romance on organizational outcomes remains inconclusive. Some studies suggest that workplace romance may enhance engagement and performance through increased emotional support and job involvement (Khan et al., 2022), while others indicate negative consequences such as workplace ostracism, conflict, and reduced productivity (Qiu et al., 2023). These contradictory findings suggest that the effect of workplace romance is highly context-dependent and may be influenced by mediating psychological mechanisms such as job stress and employee engagement.

Social Exchange Theory (SET), initially proposed by Homans (1958) and further developed by Blau (1964), focuses on reciprocal relationships between individuals and organizations through the exchange of resources, both material and social. In this study, SET provides a relevant framework to explain how Workplace Romance, Employee Engagement, Job Stress, and Employee Performance are interconnected through social and emotional exchange mechanisms within the organization. According to SET, individuals engage in relationships with the expectation of obtaining benefits or rewards from their interactions. In this context, Workplace Romance can be viewed as a form of emotional exchange between employees that may influence well-being and work involvement. Positive romantic relationships may provide emotional support, strengthen Employee Engagement, and improve Employee Performance. However, workplace romance may also generate interpersonal conflict and tension, which may increase Job Stress and reduce productivity. Furthermore, Job Tenure may act as a moderating factor, as employees with longer tenure are generally more experienced in managing interpersonal dynamics and workplace boundaries, whereas newer employees may be more vulnerable to conflict and social pressure. Therefore, SET serves as the main theoretical foundation of this study by explaining how both positive and negative social exchanges influence Employee Engagement, Job Stress, and Employee Performance in the mining industry context.

Affective Events Theory (AET), introduced by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), explains that workplace events can trigger emotional reactions that influence employee attitudes and behaviors. This theory suggests that work environments are not only shaped by job demands and organizational structures but also by interpersonal events that generate positive or negative emotional experiences. In this study, AET provides a relevant framework to explain how Workplace Romance influences Job Stress, Employee Engagement, and Employee Performance. Workplace Romance can be viewed as an interpersonal workplace event with strong emotional intensity. Positive romantic relationships may generate emotions such as happiness, comfort, support, and motivation, which can enhance Employee Engagement and improve Employee Performance (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Kahn, 1990). Conversely, workplace romance may also create negative emotions such as anxiety, jealousy, conflict, or social pressure, which can increase Job Stress and reduce performance (Basch & Fisher, 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Furthermore, Job Tenure may act

as a moderating factor, as employees with longer tenure generally have greater experience and adaptability in managing interpersonal dynamics, while employees with shorter tenure may be more vulnerable to emotional pressure and workplace conflict. Therefore, AET serves as a complementary theory in explaining how emotional reactions arising from Workplace Romance can generate both positive and negative impacts on Employee Engagement, Job Stress, and Employee Performance in the mining industry context.

Furthermore, individual characteristics such as job tenure may shape how employees respond to workplace romance dynamics. Job tenure refers to the length of time an employee has held a specific position (Ng & Feldman, 2013). Employees with longer tenure are generally more experienced in managing workplace relationships and may have greater emotional stability and social legitimacy. Conversely, employees with shorter tenure may be more vulnerable to social pressure, stress, and role ambiguity. Prior research indicates that tenure can alter the strength of relationships between organizational variables and performance outcomes, suggesting its potential role as a moderating factor.

Despite growing attention to workplace romance and employee performance, several gaps remain in the literature. First, empirical findings regarding the direction of relationships between workplace romance and performance are still inconsistent. Second, limited studies have simultaneously examined the mediating roles of job stress and employee engagement in this relationship. Third, the moderating role of job tenure, particularly in high-risk industrial contexts such as mining, has not been sufficiently explored.

Addressing these gaps, this study aims to examine the effect of workplace romance on employee performance with job stress and employee engagement as mediating variables, as well as job tenure as a moderating variable. The study is conducted in the context of a mining company (PT. X), where work intensity, safety requirements, and social interactions create a complex organizational environment. By integrating these variables, this research is expected to contribute to the development of a more comprehensive model of employee behavior in organizational settings and provide practical insights for improving workforce management in high-risk industries.

Based on the theoretical framework and previous empirical findings, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1: Workplace Romance has a significant effect on Employee Performance.

H2: Workplace Romance has a significant effect on Job Stress.

H3: Workplace Romance has a significant effect on Employee Engagement.

H4: Job Stress has a significant effect on Employee Performance.

H5: Employee Engagement has a significant effect on Employee Performance.

H6: Job Stress mediates the relationship between Workplace Romance and Employee Performance.

H7: Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between Workplace Romance and Employee Performance.

H8: Job Tenure moderates the relationship between Workplace Romance and Employee Performance.

METHOD

This study adopts an explanatory research design with a quantitative approach to examine the causal relationships among Workplace Romance, Employee Performance, Job Stress, Employee Engagement, and Job Tenure. The study aims to test both direct and indirect effects as well as moderating effects using statistical modeling.

The population consists of all workers in PT. X Mining Company in Sorowako, including permanent employees and contract workers within the operational area. Based on the 2025 company report, the accessible population comprises 2,669 permanent employees. Although contract workers are conceptually included, only permanent employees are used as the sampling frame due to data availability.

A purposive sampling technique is applied to select respondents who have experienced or are currently involved in a romantic relationship with a coworker. Job Tenure is not used as a selection criterion, as it functions as a moderating variable. This allows variation in work experience to be captured in the analysis. The minimum sample size is determined using the PLS-SEM rule of thumb, requiring 5–10 times the number of indicators. With 36 indicators, the minimum sample size is 360 respondents (36×10).

Data are collected using primary and secondary sources. Primary data are obtained through structured questionnaires distributed to respondents, while secondary data are derived from academic literature, journal articles, and company reports to support theoretical and contextual analysis. The instrument uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data analysis is conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis includes evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) through factor loadings, AVE, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and discriminant validity using Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria. The structural model (inner model) is assessed using R-square, F-square, Q-square, and path coefficients.

Hypothesis testing is performed using bootstrapping procedures. Relationships are considered significant if t-statistics ≥ 1.96 and p-values ≤ 0.05 . Mediation effects are examined through Job Stress and Employee Engagement, while moderation analysis is conducted to assess the role of Job Tenure through interaction effects on the relationship between Workplace Romance and Employee Performance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The outer model is used to assess the relationship between latent variables and their indicators, as well as to ensure that the research instruments are valid and reliable. The evaluation is conducted through confirmatory factor analysis using the MTMM (Multi-Trait Multi-Method) approach, which includes testing convergent validity and discriminant validity. Reliability is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity indicates the extent to which indicators correlate with the construct being measured, as reflected by the outer loading values. An indicator is considered valid if it has a loading value above 0.70; however, values between 0.50 and 0.60 are still acceptable in exploratory research (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

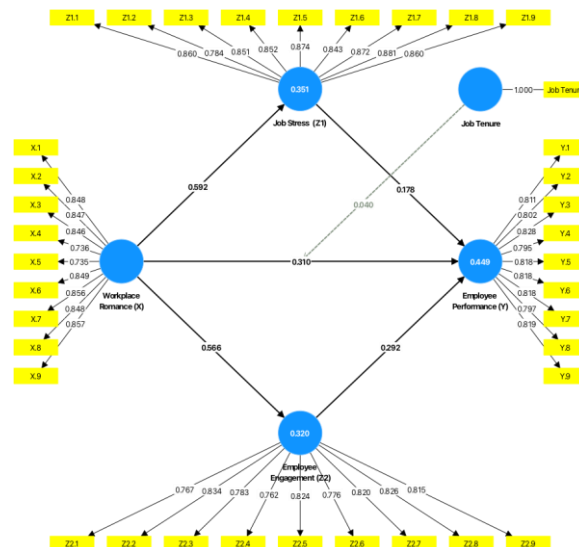
Outer Loadings of All Items

Variable	Item	Outer Loading	Remarks
Workplace Romance	X.1	0.848	Valid
	X.2	0.847	Valid
	X.3	0.846	Valid
	X.4	0.736	Valid
	X.5	0.735	Valid
	X.6	0.849	Valid
	X.7	0.856	Valid
	X.8	0.848	Valid
	X.9	0.857	Valid
Job Stress	Z1.1	0.860	Valid
	Z1.2	0.784	Valid
	Z1.3	0.851	Valid
	Z1.4	0.852	Valid
	Z1.5	0.874	Valid
	Z1.6	0.843	Valid
	Z1.7	0.872	Valid
	Z1.8	0.881	Valid
	Z1.9	0.860	Valid
Employee Engagement	Z2.1	0.767	Valid
	Z2.2	0.834	Valid
	Z2.3	0.783	Valid
	Z2.4	0.762	Valid
	Z2.5	0.824	Valid
	Z2.6	0.776	Valid
	Z2.7	0.820	Valid
	Z2.8	0.826	Valid
	Z2.9	0.815	Valid
Employee Performance	Y.1	0.811	Valid
	Y.2	0.802	Valid

	Y.3	0.828	Valid
	Y.4	0.795	Valid
	Y.5	0.818	Valid
	Y.6	0.818	Valid
	Y.7	0.818	Valid
	Y.8	0.797	Valid
	Y.9	0.819	Valid
Job Tenure	Job Tenure	1.000	Valid

Source: Processed PLS output (Appendix), 2026

It can be seen that all indicator loadings are above 0.70, indicating that the convergent validity assumption has been fulfilled for all measurement items. The outer loading results are also presented in the figure below.



Gambar 1 Nilai Loading Factors Seluruh Item Indikator Penelitian

Sumber: Hasil Output PLS (Lampiran), 2026

In addition to outer loading, convergent validity is also assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). A model is considered to have adequate convergent validity if the AVE value is greater than 0.50, indicating that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance of its indicators.

Based on the outer loading results, the most dominant indicators for each variable are as follows: Workplace Romance (X.9 = 0.857), Job Stress (Z1.8 = 0.881), Employee Engagement (Z2.2 = 0.834), and Employee Performance (Y.3 = 0.828). These indicators represent the strongest contributors to their respective constructs due to having the highest loading values within each variable.

Uji Reabilitas Konstruk

Table 2 Construct Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Remarks
Workplace Romance (X)	0.941	0.946	0.951	Reliable
Employee Performance (Y)	0.936	0.942	0.946	Reliable
Job Stress (Z1)	0.953	0.954	0.960	Reliable
Employee Engagement (Z2)	0.930	0.935	0.942	Reliable

Source: Processed PLS output (Appendix), 2026

The Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are greater than 0.70. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables meet the reliability criteria.

Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test in PLS-SEM is used to ensure that there is no excessively high correlation among the predictor (independent) variables in the model. High multicollinearity can

lead to biased and unstable estimates, making it difficult to distinguish the individual effects of each predictor.

Multicollinearity is assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). A VIF value ≤ 10 indicates that multicollinearity is not a serious concern, meaning the relationships among independent variables remain acceptable. In practice, many researchers prefer a stricter threshold of VIF < 5 for greater robustness, although VIF ≤ 10 is still widely accepted.

Table 3 Multicollinearity Test Results

Predictor Variable	Job Stress (Z1)	Employee Engagement (Z2)	Employee Performance (Y)	Remarks
Workplace Romance (X)	1.000	1.000	1.787	No multicollinearity
Job Stress (Z1)	-	-	1.703	No multicollinearity
Employee Engagement (Z2)	-	-	1.629	No multicollinearity
Job Tenure	-	-	1.010	No multicollinearity
Job Tenure $\times$ Workplace Romance (X)	-	-	1.017	No multicollinearity

Source: PLS Output (Appendix), 2026

Based on the multicollinearity test results, it can be concluded that all variables pass the multicollinearity test, as all VIF values are below 5.

R Square Test

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the extent to which the independent variables (X) explain the variation in the dependent variable (Y). In other words, R^2 is used to measure the predictive power of the model and the overall contribution of the independent variables in explaining the dependent variable simultaneously.

Table 4 R Square Test

Variable	R Square
Job Stress (Z1)	0.351
Employee Engagement (Z2)	0.320
Employee Performance (Y)	0.449

Source: PLS Output (Appendix), 2026

Based on the R^2 interpretation (Chin, 1998), the results show that Employee Engagement (Z2) has an R^2 of 0.320 (Adjusted 0.318), meaning 32.0% of the variance is explained by the model, while 68.0% is explained by other factors. Job Stress (Z1) has an R^2 of 0.351 (Adjusted 0.349), indicating 35.1% explanatory power from the model and 64.9% from external factors. Meanwhile, Employee Performance (Y) shows an R^2 of 0.449 (Adjusted 0.442), meaning 44.9% of its variation is explained by the model, with 55.1% influenced by other variables outside the model.

According to Chin (1998), all these values fall into the moderate (medium) category because they are above 0.33 but below 0.67. This indicates that the research model has a moderate explanatory power in explaining the endogenous variables, although additional factors outside the model still play a significant role.

Goodness of Fit Test

Table 4 Goodness of Fit Test

Variable	R Square	AVE
Workplace Romance (X)	-	0.682
Job Stress (Z1)	0.351	0.728
Employee Engagement (Z2)	0.320	0.642
Employee Performance (Y)	0.449	0.659

Source: PLS Output (Appendix), 2026

Based on the results, the R Square values indicate that Workplace Romance explains 35.1% of Job Stress variance, while the remaining 64.9% is influenced by other factors. Workplace Romance also explains 32.0% of Employee Engagement variance, with 68.0% explained by external variables. Meanwhile, Workplace Romance, Job Stress, Employee Engagement, and Job Tenure interaction explain 44.9% of Employee Performance variance, while 55.1% is influenced by other factors outside the model.

The AVE values for all constructs are above 0.50, indicating that convergent validity is fulfilled: Workplace Romance (0.682), Job Stress (0.728), Employee Engagement (0.642), and Employee Performance (0.659). This confirms that the indicators adequately represent their respective constructs.

The Goodness of Fit (GoF) was calculated using the average AVE (0.678) and average R Square (0.373), resulting in: $\text{GoF} = \sqrt{(0.678 \times 0.373)} = \sqrt{0.253} = 0.503$

According to the criteria by Wetzels et al. (2009), a GoF value above 0.36 indicates a good model fit. Therefore, the model demonstrates a good overall fit and is considered capable of adequately explaining the relationships among the study variables.

F-Square Test

The f^2 (effect size) test in PLS-SEM is used to assess the local effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable by examining the change in R^2 when a predictor is removed from the model. This test helps determine the relative contribution of each exogenous variable in explaining endogenous constructs.

Table 6 F-Square Test

Predictor	Job Stress (Z1)	Employee Engagement (Z2)	Employee Performance (Y)
Workplace Romance (X)	0.541	0.471	0.098
Job Stress (Z1)	-	-	0.034
Employee Engagement (Z2)	-	-	0.095
Job Tenure	-	-	0.003
Job Tenure × Workplace Romance (X)	-	-	0.003

Source: PLS Output (Appendix), 2026

The results show that Workplace Romance (X) has a large effect on Job Stress (Z1) ($f^2 = 0.541$) and Employee Engagement (Z2) ($f^2 = 0.471$), indicating strong explanatory power for both constructs.

In contrast, its direct effect on Employee Performance (Y) is small ($f^2 = 0.098$). Similarly, Employee Engagement ($f^2 = 0.095$) and Job Stress ($f^2 = 0.034$) also show small effects on Employee Performance.

Meanwhile, Job Tenure ($f^2 = 0.003$) and the interaction term Job Tenure × Workplace Romance ($f^2 = 0.003$) have negligible effects on Employee Performance, indicating almost no practical contribution in the model.

Q-Square Test

The Q^2 (predictive relevance) test is conducted using the blindfolding procedure to assess the model's predictive capability for endogenous constructs. A model is considered to have predictive relevance if the Q^2 value is greater than 0, whereas values of 0 or below indicate a lack of predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 7 Q-Square Test

Variable	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (1 - SSE/SSO)$	Description
Workplace Romance (X)	3510.000	3510.000	0.000	Exogenous variable
Job Stress (Z1)	3510.000	2632.876	0.250	Predictive relevance
Employee Engagement (Z2)	3510.000	2806.331	0.200	Predictive relevance
Employee Performance (Y)	3510.000	2513.503	0.284	Predictive relevance
Job Tenure	390.000	390.000	0.000	Exogenous/control variable

Source: PLS Output (Appendix), 2026

The results show that all endogenous constructs have Q^2 values greater than 0, indicating that the model has predictive relevance.

Specifically, Employee Engagement (0.200), Job Stress (0.250), and Employee Performance (0.284) all demonstrate moderate predictive relevance based on Hair et al. (2017). Among these, Employee Performance has the highest Q^2 value, indicating the strongest predictive accuracy within the model.

Meanwhile, Workplace Romance (X) and Job Tenure both have Q^2 values of 0.000, which is expected since they function as exogenous variables and are not predicted by other constructs in the model.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Direct Effect Hypotheses

Direct hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the direct relationships between variables in the research model. The test was performed using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS. The decision criteria are based on path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. A hypothesis is supported if t-statistics > 1.96, p-value < 0.05, and the direction of the coefficient is consistent with the proposed hypothesis.

Table 8 Direct Effect Hypotheses

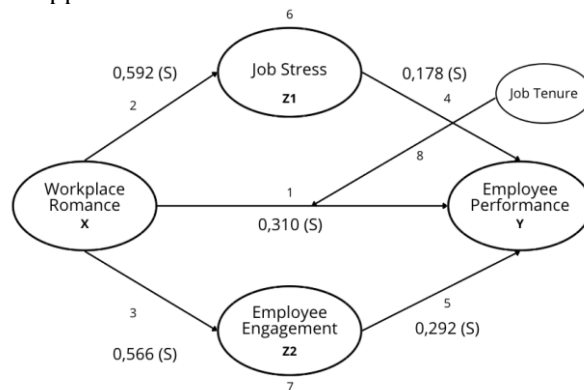
Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P-value	Result	Decision
H1	Workplace Romance (X) →	0.310	4.469	0.000	Significant	Accepted

	Employee Performance (Y)					
H2	Workplace Romance (X) → Job Stress (Z1)	0.592	12.957	0.000	Significant, positive	Rejected
H3	Workplace Romance (X) → Employee Engagement (Z2)	0.566	9.191	0.000	Significant	Accepted
H4	Job Stress (Z1) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.178	3.005	0.003	Significant, positive	Rejected
H5	Employee Engagement (Z2) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.292	4.193	0.000	Significant	Accepted

Source: PLS Output (Appendix), 2026

Based on Table 8, five direct relationships were tested in this study. The results show that H1, H3, and H5 are supported, as they meet all criteria (t -statistics > 1.96 , p -value < 0.05 , and consistent coefficient direction).

Meanwhile, H2 and H4 are statistically significant but do not align with the hypothesized direction, as both coefficients are positive while the hypotheses predicted a negative relationship. Therefore, H2 and H4 are not supported.



Gambar 2 Jalur Pengaruh Langsung Model Struktural
Sumber: Diolah oleh peneliti (2026)

Based on Figure 5.3, Workplace Romance shows a direct positive effect on Employee Performance ($\beta = 0.310$). It also positively influences Job Stress ($\beta = 0.592$) and Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.566$). Furthermore, Job Stress has a positive effect on Employee Performance ($\beta = 0.178$), while Employee Engagement also positively affects Employee Performance ($\beta = 0.292$).

Overall, all direct paths indicate positive coefficients. The strongest relationship is between Workplace Romance and Job Stress ($\beta = 0.592$), whereas the weakest is between Job Stress and Employee Performance ($\beta = 0.178$). Thus, all relationships are statistically significant, although not all are consistent with the hypothesized directions.

H1: Workplace Romance → Employee Performance

The results show a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.310$, $t = 4.469$, $p < 0.001$). Since $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$, H1 is supported. This indicates that higher Workplace Romance is associated with higher Employee Performance.

H2: Workplace Romance → Job Stress

A significant positive relationship is found ($\beta = 0.592$, $t = 12.957$, $p < 0.001$). Although statistically significant, the direction is opposite to the hypothesis. Therefore, H2 is not supported.

H3: Workplace Romance → Employee Engagement

The effect is significant and positive ($\beta = 0.566$, $t = 9.191$, $p < 0.001$). H3 is supported, indicating that Workplace Romance increases Employee Engagement.

H4: Job Stress → Employee Performance

The relationship is significant ($\beta = 0.178$, $t = 3.005$, $p = 0.003$), but the direction is positive instead of negative as hypothesized. Thus, H4 is not supported.

H5: Employee Engagement → Employee Performance

A significant positive effect is found ($\beta = 0.292$, $t = 4.193$, $p < 0.001$). H5 is supported, showing that higher engagement improves performance.

Indirect Effect Hypotheses

Indirect effect hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the mediating role of variables in explaining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In this study, Job Stress and Employee Engagement function as mediators in the relationship between Workplace Romance and Employee Performance.

The analysis was performed using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS by evaluating the specific indirect effects. A hypothesis is considered supported if the t-statistics value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05.

Mediation Effect Results

Table 9 Mediation Effect Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Indirect Effect	T Statistics	P-value	Result	Decision
H6	Workplace Romance (X) → Job Stress (Z1) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.105	3.107	0.002	Significant	Supported
H7	Workplace Romance (X) → Employee Engagement (Z2) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.165	3.309	0.001	Significant	Supported

Source: PLS Output (Appendix), 2026

Based on Table 9, both indirect effects are statistically significant, as indicated by t-statistics > 1.96 and p-values < 0.05 . This confirms that Job Stress and Employee Engagement significantly mediate the relationship between Workplace Romance and Employee Performance.

H6: Job Stress Mediation Effect

The indirect effect of Workplace Romance on Employee Performance through Job Stress is significant ($\beta = 0.105$, $t = 3.107$, $p = 0.002$). Thus, H6 is supported. This indicates that Job Stress functions as a significant mediator in explaining the effect of Workplace Romance on Employee Performance.

H7: Employee Engagement Mediation Effect

The indirect effect through Employee Engagement is also significant ($\beta = 0.165$, $t = 3.309$, $p = 0.001$), confirming H7. This shows that Employee Engagement plays a mediating role in the relationship between Workplace Romance and Employee Performance.

Overall, both mediation hypotheses are supported, with Employee Engagement demonstrating a stronger mediating effect compared to Job Stress.

Moderation Effect Results

Table 10 Moderation Effect Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P-value	Result	Decision
H8	Job Tenure × Workplace Romance (X) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.040	0.994	0.320	Not Significant	Not Supported

Source: PLS Output (Appendix), 2026

Based on Table 10, the interaction effect between Job Tenure and Workplace Romance on Employee Performance is not significant ($\beta = 0.040$, $t = 0.994$, $p = 0.320$). Therefore, H8 is not supported.

This result indicates that Job Tenure does not moderate the relationship between Workplace Romance and Employee Performance. In other words, the effect of Workplace Romance on Employee Performance is consistent across employees with different lengths of service. Overall, the moderation hypothesis is not supported, indicating that Job Tenure does not play a significant role in strengthening or weakening the proposed relationship.

Research Findings Discussion

This section discusses the results of hypothesis testing using SEM-PLS, integrating path coefficients, statistical significance, and descriptive findings of key indicators. Several negatively

worded items were reverse-coded; thus, higher scores reflect positive tendencies consistent with the construct direction.

Workplace Romance → Employee Performance

Workplace Romance has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance ($\beta = 0.310$; $t = 4.469$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, H1 is supported. Higher Workplace Romance is associated with higher Employee Performance.

The average score of Workplace Romance is high (mean = 3.95), with the highest indicator X.5 (mean = 4.21), reflecting low perception of short-term, non-committed relationships after reverse coding. Employee Performance is also high (mean = 4.07), with Y.2 as the strongest item (mean = 4.22), indicating strong achievement orientation. These findings suggest that stable Workplace Romance does not hinder performance and may enhance emotional support and motivation in PT. X mining context.

Workplace Romance → Job Stress

Workplace Romance significantly affects Job Stress ($\beta = 0.592$; $t = 12.957$; $p < 0.001$), but in a positive direction; thus H2 is not supported. Job Stress is moderate (mean = 3.31), with Z1.2 (mean = 3.93) as the dominant indicator, reflecting role ambiguity. Although relationships are relatively stable (X.5 high), Workplace Romance still increases stress due to boundary management between personal and professional roles. This indicates that Workplace Romance does not reduce stress but may increase psychological pressure related to workplace perceptions and professionalism.

Workplace Romance → Employee Engagement

Workplace Romance has a positive and significant effect on Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.566$; $t = 9.191$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. Employee Engagement is high, with Z2.3 (reverse-coded, mean = 4.20) and Z2.4 (mean = 4.19) indicating strong enthusiasm and low disengagement. Stable romantic relationships provide emotional support, enhancing enthusiasm and engagement at work.

Job Stress → Employee Performance

Job Stress significantly affects Employee Performance ($\beta = 0.178$; $t = 3.005$; $p = 0.003$), but positively; thus H4 is not supported. Job Stress is moderate (mean = 3.31), while Employee Performance remains high (mean = 4.07), dominated by Y.2 (mean = 4.22). This suggests that moderate stress may enhance alertness and responsibility in a mining work environment, although excessive stress could still be detrimental.

Employee Engagement → Employee Performance

Employee Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance ($\beta = 0.292$; $t = 4.193$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H5. High engagement is reflected in Z2.3 and Z2.4, indicating strong enthusiasm and dedication, which translate into higher performance achievement (Y.2). Thus, engagement is a key driver of employee performance.

Mediation: Workplace Romance → Job Stress → Employee Performance

Job Stress significantly mediates the relationship (indirect effect = 0.105; $t = 3.107$; $p = 0.002$), supporting H6. This indicates that Workplace Romance increases Job Stress, which in turn relates to Employee Performance. However, stress remains at a manageable level, meaning its impact does not necessarily reduce performance. Thus, Job Stress functions as a partial psychological mechanism in the model.

Mediation: Workplace Romance → Employee Engagement → Employee Performance

Employee Engagement significantly mediates the relationship (indirect effect = 0.165; $t = 3.309$; $p = 0.001$), supporting H7. Compared to Job Stress mediation (0.105), Employee Engagement shows a stronger mediating effect, indicating it is the dominant pathway linking Workplace Romance and Employee Performance. Romantic relationships contribute more strongly to performance through increased engagement rather than stress.

Moderation: Job Tenure × Workplace Romance → Employee Performance

Job Tenure does not significantly moderate the relationship ($\beta = 0.040$; $t = 0.994$; $p = 0.320$), thus H8 is rejected. Most respondents have early-to-mid tenure, indicating limited variation in experience. This suggests that tenure does not significantly change how Workplace Romance affects performance. Other factors such as emotional maturity, organizational culture, and professionalism are likely more influential than tenure in shaping this relationship.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effect of Workplace Romance on Employee Performance with Job Stress and Employee Engagement as mediating variables, and Job Tenure as a moderating variable in PT. X mining company. The results show that Workplace Romance has a significant positive effect on Employee Performance, Job Stress, and Employee Engagement. Although Job Stress was hypothesized to have a negative effect, the findings indicate a positive and significant relationship, suggesting that stress in this context remains manageable and may contribute to increased focus and discipline rather than reducing performance. Employee Engagement also has a significant positive effect on Employee Performance, confirming its important role in improving employee outcomes. Mediation analysis reveals that both Job Stress and Employee Engagement significantly mediate the relationship between Workplace Romance and Employee Performance, with Employee Engagement emerging as the stronger mediating mechanism. However, Job Tenure does not significantly moderate the relationship, indicating that length of employment does not alter the impact of Workplace Romance on Employee Performance.

Overall, Workplace Romance plays an important role in shaping Employee Performance both directly and indirectly, with Employee Engagement being the most dominant pathway in this relationship. These findings indicate that workplace romantic relationships are not inherently detrimental when managed professionally, as they may enhance engagement and performance. Therefore, organizations need to ensure that such relationships are properly managed to prevent excessive stress and to maintain productivity.

Based on these findings, PT. X is advised to implement clear and balanced organizational policies regarding Workplace Romance, including guidelines on professional boundaries, conflict of interest, supervisor-subordinate relationships, and fairness in performance evaluation. Employees are expected to maintain professionalism by separating personal and work-related matters, managing emotions effectively, and remaining focused on performance targets to avoid workplace disruption. For future research, it is recommended to apply longitudinal designs to capture changes in Workplace Romance over time, use mixed-method approaches to gain deeper qualitative insights, and differentiate stages or types of romantic relationships. Further studies may also expand the research context to other industries such as banking, education, healthcare, manufacturing, and technology to improve generalizability and comparative understanding.

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