

Research Article

Validity and Reliability Test of The Indonesian Version of The Work Stress Scale for Correctional Officers

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Abstract

Occupational stress is one of the major issues in occupational health and safety. Correctional officers are one of the occupations with the highest levels of psychological stress and tend to be positive on screening for mental health disorders compared to other professions. The Work Stress Scale for Correctional Officers (WSSCO) is a questionnaire to assess work stress in correctional officers. This study aims to obtain a valid and reliable Indonesian WSSCO questionnaire. The study began with a transcultural adaptation process following WHO recommendations, which included forward translation, expert panel review, backward translation, pre-testing, and cognitive debriefing. Data collection was then conducted using consecutive sampling of 40 correctional officers in Jakarta in May 2025. This was followed by the assessment of content validity, construct validity, and internal consistency reliability. The Indonesian version of the WSSCO questionnaire had good content validity (ICVI = 1 and S-CVI \geq 0.90). The Spearman correlation coefficient ranged from 0.331 to 0.853 ($p < 0.05$), indicating satisfactory construct validity. Internal consistency reliability was high, with a total Cronbach's α of 0.964 and subscale Cronbach's α values ranging from 0.778 to 0.936. The Indonesian version of WSSCO is a valid and reliable tool for assessing work stress in correctional officers.

Keyword: WSSCO, work stress, validity, reliability, correctional officers.

Uji Validitas dan Reliabilitas Kuesioner Work Stress Scale for Correctional Officers

Abstrak

Stres kerja merupakan salah satu isu utama dalam kesehatan dan keselamatan kerja. Petugas masyarakat adalah salah satu pekerjaan dengan tingkat stres psikologis tertinggi dan cenderung positif pada skrining gangguan kesehatan mental dibandingkan dengan profesi lainnya. Work Stress Scale for Correctional Officers (WSSCO) adalah kuesioner untuk menilai stres kerja pada petugas masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendapatkan kuesioner WSSCO Bahasa Indonesia yang valid dan reliabel. Penelitian diawali dengan adaptasi transkultural sesuai rekomendasi WHO yang terdiri dari terjemahan ke bahasa target, panel ahli, terjemahan balik, uji coba, dan wawancara. Penelitian dilanjutkan dengan pengambilan data secara consecutive sampling pada 40 orang petugas masyarakat di Jakarta pada bulan Mei 2025. Kemudian dilanjutkan dengan uji validitas isi, validitas konstruk, dan reliabilitas konsistensi internal. Kuesioner WSSCO versi bahasa Indonesia memiliki validitas isi yang baik (I-CVI = 1 dan S-CVI \geq 0,90). Uji korelasi Spearman r (0,331–0,853), $p < 0,05$, dan uji reliabilitas konsistensi internal Cronbach α total 0,964 dan Cronbach α kategori/subskala WSSCO (0,778–0,936). Kuesioner WSSCO versi Bahasa Indonesia valid dan reliabel untuk menilai stres kerja pada petugas masyarakat.

Kata kunci: WSSCO, stres kerja, validitas, reliabilitas, petugas masyarakat.

Introduction

Occupational stress is a serious health problem and one of the major issues currently faced in occupational health. The 2023 survey data show that 41% of workers experience occupational stress, with a prevalence of 25% in Southeast Asia and 16% in Indonesia.¹ Correctional officers are one of the occupations most at risk of occupational stress. This is related to the characteristics of stressful work, including overcapacity in prisons/detention centers, insufficient correctional technical personnel, officers lacking mastery of their duties, a lack of supporting infrastructure for carrying out their duties, working in rotation, and establishing good relationships with prisoners, superiors, and fellow correctional officers.²⁻⁴

In some countries, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States, correctional officers show a higher prevalence of mental health disorders and occupational stress than other professions.⁵ In Indonesia, studies indicate that work stress among correctional officers is moderate, with workload as the primary factor.⁶⁻⁷ Although several studies in Indonesia have assessed work stress among correctional officers, most have used general stress measurement instruments that are not specifically designed to capture the unique occupational stressors they face. These stressors include security risks, interactions with inmates, and institutional constraints.⁶ which may not be adequately represented in generic instruments. Therefore, it is important to assess work stress using an instrument suitable for correctional officers. The Work Stress Scale for Correctional Officers (WSSCO) questionnaire is a validated instrument for assessing work stress.^{8,9} However, an Indonesian version of the instrument is not yet available, so this study is needed to ensure accurate and consistent results in the Indonesian cultural and language context. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to evaluate the validity and reliability Indonesian version of the WSSCO questionnaire.

Methods

This study employed a cross-sectional design among correctional officers at the Juvenile Correctional Facilities (Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak/LPKA) Class II Jakarta in May 2025.

The study consisted of two stages. Stage 1, transcultural adaptation of the WSSCO questionnaire. Stage 2, validity and reliability testing of the Indonesian version of the WSSCO questionnaire.

Original Version of The WSSCO Questionnaire

The WSSCO questionnaire was used to survey work stress in correctional officers. The WSSCO questionnaire consists of five categories/subscales: excessive workload, conflicting roles, unclear tasks, inadequate physical conditions at the correctional institution, perceived threats, and general problems. The excessive workload category/subscale consists of six items/statements. The conflicting roles and unclear tasks category consists of 10 items/statements. The category/subscale of inadequate physical conditions at the correctional institution consists of four items/statements. The threat perception category/subscale consists of seven items/statements. The general problem category/subscale consists of eight items/statements. The assessment of work stress using this instrument indicates that higher scores indicate greater work stress among correctional officers.⁹ The questionnaire is also able to identify various work stressors that are a source of psychological distress for correctional officers.⁸

Phase 1: Transcultural Adaptation of The WSSCO Questionnaire

The study began with an application for permission to translate and adapt the initial questionnaire, developed by the original questionnaire development team. The transcultural adaptation of the WSSCO questionnaire followed the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, which included forward translation, expert panel review, backward translation, pre-testing with cognitive debriefing, and finalization. The forward translation was conducted by two sworn translators from English into Bahasa Indonesia, and the results were subsequently evaluated by an expert panel consisting of occupational physicians with psychosocial subspecialties, clinical psychologists, and correctional officers from detention centers, prisons, and LPKA. The

panel discussed and synthesized the translations to ensure cultural and contextual suitability, after which content validity testing was performed. Each item was assessed using a four-point relevance scale (1 = not relevant, 2 = somewhat relevant, 3 = quite relevant, 4 = very relevant), and the Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated, including both Item-CVI (I-CVI) and Scale-CVI (S-CVI) values.^{10,11} The backward translation into English was then carried out by two different sworn translators unfamiliar with the original version, followed by reconciliation among translators, experts, researchers, and supervisors to resolve differences in meaning and ensure consistency with the original questionnaire. This process produced a pre-final version of the WSSCO Bahasa Indonesia questionnaire, which was piloted with correctional officers. Cognitive debriefing interviews were conducted to evaluate comprehension and cultural appropriateness of each item.^{12,13} Based on the results of pre-testing and debriefing, the researcher and supervisors finalized the WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire.

Phase 2: Construct Validity and Reliability Testing

The final version of the Indonesian WSSCO questionnaire was then tested for construct validity and reliability with correctional officers at LPKA Class II Jakarta. Construct validity was assessed using Pearson or Spearman correlation, depending on data distribution. Normality was first evaluated; if the data were normally distributed, Pearson's correlation was applied; otherwise, Spearman's correlation was used. The correlation test examined the relationship between item scores and total scores.¹⁶ A correlation coefficient of ≥ 0.3 indicated that the questionnaire items were valid.^{17,18} Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's α , with a value of >0.7 indicating good reliability.¹⁹

Respondent

Respondents were correctional officers at LPKA Class II Jakarta who met the inclusion criteria: having worked for at least 1 year and being willing to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria are correctional officers who are on psychopharmaceutical medication or are undergoing psychotherapy, and officers who are not related to prisoners, such as those in the human resources department. Respondents in phase 1, pre-testing and cognitive debriefing, were conducted on 10 correctional officers.^{12,13} Respondents in phase 2 underwent construct validity and reliability tests, with 40 correctional officers participating. The sample size of 40 respondents was considered adequate for preliminary validation studies, particularly for assessing internal consistency and item total correlations. Previous methodological studies suggest that a sample size of 30-50 participants is acceptable for pilot validation before larger-scale psychometric evaluation, especially when the aim is initial assessment rather than factor analysis.^{12,14,15}

Ethical approval

This study has also been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of FKUI RSCM number: KET-244/UN2.F/ETIK/PPM 00.02/2025 and the Directorate General of Corrections number PAS.9-HH.04.04-313.

Results

Table 1 shows that the majority of officers were male (80%) and aged 19–44 years (90%). Most respondents had a high school education (62.5%), were married (77.5%), and had 6–10 years of work experience (60%). In addition, the majority were staff members (70%) and did not work in a shift-based system.

Table 1. Characteristics of Correctional Officers of LPKA Class II Jakarta (n=40)

Characteristics	n	Percentage
Correctional Officers		
Staff	28	70
Guard	12	30
Age		
19-44	36	90
45-59	4	10
Gender		
Male	32	80
Female	8	20
Marital Status		
Unmarried	5	12.5
Married	31	77.5
Widowed	4	10
Educational Level		
High School	25	62.5
Diploma	3	7.5
Bachelor	11	27.5
Master	1	2.5
Tenure		
< 6 years	1	2.5
6 – 10 years	24	60
>10 years	15	37.5
Work Shift		
Non shift	28	70
Shift	12	30

Some of the discussions in the expert panel included adjustments to Correctional Law no. 22 of 2022 regarding references to prisons/detention centers/PKA and prisoners. Item number 4, “intention” is interpreted as “conduct”. Item number 6 was changed to “The task to correct misconduct behavior of inmates”. Item number 24, “heater” was changed to “fan/AC”. Item number 26, “commission” or ‘committee’ is changed to “various parties/agencies”. Item number 32, “unusual” is replaced by “unexpected”. Item number 34, “TV/radio” is replaced by “handy talkie/HT”. Likert scale 0 = not at all, 1 = slightly, 2 = moderately, 3 = highly, 4 = extremely. At this stage, no items were discarded, and the expert team agreed that all statement items were relevant to the research. The results are in synthesis 1 (available as [Supplementary File 1](#)).

After synthesis 1, the experts assessed the content relevance of the items. All experts rated the WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire items as 3 or 4, yielding I-CVI = 1 and S-CVI = 1. In the backward translation, several discussions arose, including the word “prison” being changed to “correctional”. The word “issues” was agreed to be

translated into “problem”. Item number 23, it was agreed to combine the two translations into “Having to be alert at all times at the workplace”. The results are contained in synthesis 2 (available as [Supplementary File 2](#)).

At this stage, there were no changes in the translation of the WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire. The researcher and supervisor agreed that the pre-final version of the WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire would be used for pre-testing. During pre-testing and cognitive debriefing, all respondents understood the questionnaire and had no difficulty completing it. In item number 25, some respondents gave suggestions; “Feeling like a prisoner” was added as an example to “Feeling like a prisoner (example of feeling restricted rights like a prisoner)”.

After discussion by the researcher and supervisor, it was agreed that item number 25 should be “Feeling like a prisoner (e.g., feeling restricted in rights like a prisoner)”. The suggestions from respondents did not change the meaning of the questionnaire items and could clarify them. The entire transcultural adaptation process has been carried out. The researcher and the supervisors agreed on the final version of the

WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire. Furthermore, respondents' data were collected for construct

validity and reliability testing. The entire transcultural adaptation process is in the appendices.

Table 2. The Results of Categories/Subscale WSSCO Questionnaire

Category	Mean±SD	Median (Min-Max)
Excessive workload (items 2,3,6, 26,29,35)	7.18 ±4.48	
Conflicting roles and unclear tasks (items 4, 9, 11, 14, 15, 19, 21, 22, 27, 31)		8.5 (0 – 28)
Inadequate physical conditions at the correctional institution (items 7, 24, 25, 34)		4 (0 – 11)
Threat perception (items 8, 12, 16, 18, 23, 30, 32)	7.53 ±4.76	
General problem (items 1, 5, 10, 13, 17, 20, 28, 33)		7 (0 – 22)
Total score of WSSCO		32 (0 – 92)

Table 3. The Results of Construct Validity of the WSSCO Indonesian Questionnaire

Item	r	p
Economic problem	0.331	0.037
Inappropriate job distribution in the workplace	0.700	<0.001
Workload	0.676	<0.001
Officers, Inmates, or visitors conduct that violates the Correctional Institution	0.590	<0.001
Incapable of partaking in social activities (such as playing sports, reading, watching movies) due to work	0.681	<0.001
The task is to correct the misconduct of inmates	0.717	<0.001
Inadequate working environment for drinking, eating, etc	0.689	<0.001
The risk of being threatened due to my job	0.753	<0.001
Ignorant superiors toward the needs and ideas of correction officers	0.841	<0.001
Lack of quality time with family due to my job	0.720	<0.001
Having to be responsible for the mistakes of others in the workplace	0.777	<0.001
Getting involved in quarrels and fights with inmates	0.686	<0.001
Suffering from health issues due to my job	0.696	<0.001
No opportunity to perform in my expertise field	0.629	<0.001
Objections of Inmates, Visitors, and counselors against physical checking by correction officers	0.640	<0.001
Fear of a criminal report against me	0.431	0.005
Ignoring my family's needs due to the demands of my job	0.791	<0.001
Under suspicion of violation	0.621	<0.001
Arbitrary decisions and frequently changing decisions	0.781	<0.001
Bringing work problems home	0.700	<0.001
Unclear orders at the workplace	0.795	<0.001
Incapable of freely voicing my aspirations wherever I am	0.809	<0.001
Having to be alert at all times in the workplace	0.409	0.009
Inadequate physical conditions (i.e., ventilation, lighting, air conditioning: fan/AC) at the workplace	0.651	<0.001
Feeling like an inmate (eg, feeling restricted in rights like an inmate)	0.797	<0.001
Being under surveillance by various parties/agencies at the workplace	0.584	<0.001
Discrimination against inmates by the attitude and behavior of superiors	0.768	<0.001
Transportation problems in the work commute	0.610	<0.001
The night shift is causing an additional workload	0.370	0.019
In society, my job is considered more as a "warden" than a "correctional officer."	0.447	0.004
Disruption to routine work due to the superior's orders	0.853	<0.001
Facing unexpected events (for instance, a runaway, a revolt, a fire) at the workplace	0.550	<0.001
Lack of time with friends and family due to my job	0.754	<0.001
Lack of communication devices (walkie-talkies) at the workplace	0.665	<0.001
Excessive responsibility in my position	0.743	<0.001

Table 4. The Results of the Reliability of the WSSCO Indonesian Questionnaire

Category	Cronbach α
Excessive workload (items 2,3,6, 26,29,35)	0.793
Conflicting roles and unclear tasks (items 4, 9, 11, 14, 15, 19, 21, 22, 27, 31)	0.936
Inadequate physical conditions at the correctional institution (items 7, 24, 25, 34)	0.854
Threat perception (items 8, 12, 16, 18, 23, 30, 32)	0.778
General problem (items 1, 5, 10, 13, 17, 20, 28, 33)	0.876
Total WSSCO (35 items)	0.964

Item Responses Distribution of WSSCO Indonesian Questionnaire

The distribution of questionnaire item responses provides an overview of correctional officers' tendencies to respond to each statement in the Indonesian WSSCO questionnaire. From this distribution, responses vary among respondents. The distribution of questionnaire item responses is in the appendices. Table 2 shows that the perceived threat category/subscale has higher means and standard deviations than the excessive workload. In the categories of conflicting roles and unclear tasks, the median and maximum values are higher than in the categories of inadequate physical conditions at the correctional institution and general problems.

Construct Validity and Reliability Testing

The data normality test indicated that the data were not normally distributed, so the Spearman correlation test was performed. Table 3 shows that all items of the WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire have correlation coefficients (r) ranging from 0.331 to 0.853, with $p < 0.05$. It can be concluded that each item of the WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire is valid and has a strong construct. Furthermore, the internal consistency reliability test of the Indonesian WSSCO questionnaire is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 presents the Cronbach's α values for the categories/subscales of the Indonesian version of the WSSCO, ranging from 0.778 to 0.936, with a total Cronbach's α of 0.964. These results indicate that the Indonesian WSSCO questionnaire demonstrates good reliability.

Discussion

This study shows that the adaptation of the WSSCO questionnaire into Indonesian can be done effectively without altering its meaning, while taking into account the context and culture of correctional facilities in Indonesia. The working environment, which is different from the country where the questionnaire was developed, was an important consideration in the adaptation process. The content validity of the Indonesian WSSCO questionnaire, as indicated by the CVI results, meets the standard. Construct validity and reliability test results showed that the questionnaire items were valid and had good internal consistency. The study also identified that threat perception and work overload were the main factors triggering work stress in correctional officers at LPKA Class II Jakarta.

Research conducted in Indonesia has different regulations and policies from the country of origin, where the WSSCO questionnaire was first developed. Differences in legal and cultural contexts affected some of the terms and concepts used in the questionnaire instrument. In the adaptation process, terminology adjustments are important to ensure the meaning of each item remains relevant and is properly understood by respondents in Indonesia.

The job of a correctional officer is considered among the most stressful in the world. In assessing job stress, it is important to consider the specific characteristics of a particular job. The instrument used should account for the work environment, specific tasks, and the risks inherent to the profession, ensuring measurement results are more accurate and relevant. Several studies

used the WSSCO as an instrument to assess job stress in correctional officers.⁹ Other studies have used the WSSCO to assess the stressors or sources of work stress experienced by correctional officers.⁸ This shows that the WSSCO questionnaire as a whole can assess work stress experienced by correctional officers. And if a more in-depth analysis of each subscale is carried out, this instrument can be used to identify specific sources of stress/stressors.

In adapting the WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire, a few changes were made to the statements' content, and all items were retained without deletions. The adjustments were aimed at clarifying the work context of correctional officers in Indonesia, without changing the meaning of the original questionnaire. The WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire was the result of discussions and mutual agreement between experts, translators, researchers, and supervisors. This approach strengthens the content validity of the WSSCO Indonesian questionnaire, as evidenced by content validity index (CVI) results that meet the standard. In previous research on the adaptation of the WSSCO questionnaire, it was also found that the CVI met the standard.⁸ It can be concluded that the WSSCO questionnaire has good content validity.

Correctional officers are a male-dominated occupation. Some studies show that the average age of correctional officers is 35, or they are classified as young adults.^{8,16} The dominant educational level was high school, with 6-10 years of service. The factors that most contributed to triggering work stress in correctional officers at the Juvenile Correctional Facilities (LPKA) Class II in Jakarta were the perception of threat and excessive workload. Juvenile correctional facilities are typically aged 15–18 years, a developmental stage characterized by emotional instability and still-developing emotional regulation. These conditions may increase behavioral disturbances, including violence and rule violations, which can pose both physical and psychological threats to correctional officers. Furthermore, juveniles placed in these facilities continue to retain their fundamental rights as children. Consequently, correctional officers are

required not only to maintain institutional security but also to assume rehabilitative roles as mentors, educators, and parents for the juveniles. The coexistence of rehabilitative responsibilities may increase officers' workload. Overcrowding in correctional facilities, limited staffing, and high security demands increase the perceived risk of threats and violence. In addition, administrative burdens and shift work contribute to excessive workload.^{17,18} Literature indicates that risk factors for work stress among correctional officers include relationship problems (with colleagues, superiors, or inmates), excessive workload, lack of material and human resources, role conflict, poor perception or image in the community, and working in overcrowded prisons/detention centers.¹⁹ Other research shows that some of the risk factors that contribute most to work stress in correctional officers are excessive workload, lack of communication tools, and insecurity in the workplace.^{8,19,20} As well as organizational factors, such as leadership style and inconsistent regulations.¹⁹

The results of the construct validity and reliability tests indicate that the Indonesian WSSCO questionnaire has good validity and internal consistency. The results of this study are consistent with previous studies.^{8,9} This confirms that the translated and culturally adapted WSSCO questionnaire maintains its validity and reliability, allowing its use in the target population.

A limitation of this study is that factorial validity was not assessed, which limits the ability to confirm whether the instrument's original dimension structure is retained. Measurement invariance across subgroups was not evaluated, which may affect score comparability, and was not compared with other established measures of work stress or related constructs. Test-retest reliability was not conducted, limiting the assessment of temporal stability. Future studies are recommended to explore the cultural aspects and to conduct a comprehensive psychometric evaluation, including exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Assessment of measurement invariance across subgroups is also recommended to ensure comparability. In addition, evaluating criterion validity using

established stress or mental health instruments and examining test-retest reliability would strengthen the robustness of the Indonesian version of the WSSCO.

Conclusion

The Indonesian version of the WSSCO questionnaire has good content validity; all statement items are valid, and the questionnaire demonstrates good construct and internal consistency reliability. The Indonesian version of the WSSCO questionnaire is relevant and can be used to assess job stress in correctional officers in Indonesia.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study, as well as to data acquisition, analysis, and interpretation. Indry Octavia drafted the manuscript, and the co-authors provided critical revisions to the intellectual content. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

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Data and Materials Availability

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to confidentiality and privacy considerations, but are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Consent to Participate

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they participated in the study. All participants were informed of the research objectives, the procedures involved, and their rights as research participants, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Ethics Statement

This study received ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee of FKUI RSCM number: KET-244/UN2.F/ETIK/PPM 00.02/2025 and the Directorate General of Corrections number PAS.9-HH.04.04-313. All

procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee, the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki, and international ethical guidelines. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before their participation, and the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were ensured throughout the study.

Consent for Publication

All participants provided informed consent for the publication of the research findings. The manuscript does not contain any person's identifiable data.

Conflict of Interest

All authors declared no conflict of interest in the study.

AI Usage Declaration

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist in language editing and improving the clarity of the text. The authors reviewed and edited the output as necessary and take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the content.

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