CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Overview of Research Object

The fashion retail industry is characterized by its fast-paced nature, driven by shifting consumer preferences, seasonal trends, and the continuous emergence of new brands. This dynamic environment requires companies to remain agile and adaptive in their operational strategies to sustain competitiveness. The rapid cycle of product launches, marketing campaigns, and demand forecasting places significant pressure on organizations to maintain efficiency and consistency across various business functions.

In Indonesia, the fashion retail sector continues to grow as consumer behavior evolves in tandem with digitalization, lifestyle changes, and the expansion of online shopping platforms. This growth increases the complexity of internal operations, making human capital a critical component in sustaining organizational performance. Employees are expected not only to meet daily operational targets but also to be responsive to the fast-paced demands of the industry.

The object of this research is employees working in fashion retail companies in Indonesia, specifically those in back-office roles. These employees play a vital role in supporting core business processes, including merchandising, marketing coordination, stock management, customer support, data processing, and administrative functions, which directly impact the company's overall performance. Although they operate behind the scenes, the accuracy and timeliness of their work significantly affect frontline execution.

Back-office employees in the fashion retail industry frequently face high workloads, tight deadlines, and sudden shifts in task priorities. These conditions make them highly relevant for examining psychological variables such as burnout, professional self-efficacy, life satisfaction, work engagement, and job

performance. By focusing on this group, the study aims to understand how internal psychological states interact within a demanding work environment and how these factors contribute to overall organizational success.

3.2 Research Design

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a research design is a structured plan and procedure that guides researchers from philosophical assumptions to detailed methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. The research design functions as a framework to ensure that the study proceeds consistently and in alignment with its objectives. Furthermore, Creswell explains that research designs are categorized into several types to simplify their classification.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem. This approach helps individuals interpret situations and the contexts in which they interact in daily life.

The implementation of qualitative research is dynamic and develops throughout the process. Research questions, data collection techniques, and procedural steps are determined flexibly and evolve gradually. Data are typically collected directly from the social environment through observations, interviews, or analysis of relevant documents.

The analysis process is conducted inductively, beginning with specific findings that are gradually organized to form broader patterns. Through this process, researchers construct interpretations to understand the meaning embedded within the collected data. The main focus of this approach lies not in numerical values, but in meaning, context, and the subjectivity of human experiences.

The structure of qualitative research reports is flexible, enabling researchers to tailor the report to the needs of the study. This approach emphasizes presenting complexity holistically, allowing the research to represent experiences in depth.

3.2.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is an approach used to test theories or hypotheses objectively by examining measurable relationships between variables. Each variable is converted into numerical data through instruments such as questionnaires or rating scales. The resulting data are then analyzed using statistical techniques to produce accurate and objective findings.

This approach is grounded in the assumption that theories can be tested deductively. Researchers formulate hypotheses based on the literature or theoretical models, then collect data to determine whether the empirical evidence supports or rejects these hypotheses. To ensure objectivity, researchers apply rigorous procedures such as validity and reliability testing, as well as controlling for potential influences from extraneous variables.

Quantitative research also emphasizes generalization, meaning findings from a sample are expected to represent a broader population. Additionally, this research design is structured to be replicable, allowing the results to be tested in different contexts or samples to ensure consistency.

3.2.2.1 Descriptive Survey Design

According to Creswell, descriptive surveys are a form of quantitative research used to accurately describe the characteristics of a population without manipulating variables. Through this approach, researchers collect numerical data from respondents to capture actual conditions.

This design relies on standardized instruments, such as questionnaires, to portray patterns of variables within a population. It also allows researchers to

generalize their findings, provided the sample represents the population. In this design, researchers cannot intervene in respondents' conditions because the objective is to capture what naturally occurs within a group at the time data are collected.

3.2.2.2 Correlation Research Design

According to Creswell (2008), a correlational research design is part of the quantitative approach used to study the relationships between variables as they occur naturally, without intervention or manipulation. Creswell emphasizes that correlational research focuses on “the degree of association between two or more variables,” with the primary aim of determining whether the variables exhibit a specific pattern of association.

In this design, researchers collect numerical data from respondents using standardized instruments, such as questionnaires or rating scales, and then analyze the relationships among variables using correlational statistical techniques. These analyses may include Pearson correlation, regression, or other statistical methods that describe the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. The results are then interpreted to determine whether the relationships are positive, negative, or non-significant.

Creswell highlights that correlational research is not causal, meaning it cannot prove that one variable causes changes in another. It only explains patterns of association, so findings must be interpreted with caution. For example, if two variables exhibit a strong correlation, this does not imply a cause-and-effect relationship; it merely indicates that they tend to move together.

This design is used when researchers aim to identify and describe the extent to which two or more variables are related to each other. The focus is to present a clear picture of the relationship patterns among variables within a population. This approach is beneficial when researchers want to identify

variables that are significantly associated but do not yet aim to predict or forecast outcomes.

3.2.2.3 Experimental / Quasi-Experimental Design

According to Creswell (2008), the Experimental Research Design is one of the most powerful quantitative approaches for testing causal relationships through manipulation of the independent variable and observation of its effect on the dependent variable. In this design, participants are randomly assigned to experimental and control groups, allowing for more confident attribution of differences in outcomes to the treatment. Randomization helps minimize selection bias and increases the study's internal validity. Additionally, experimental designs require precise control over external variables to accurately observe treatment effects. This approach is commonly used in education, psychology, and social research, which involves the examination of intervention effects.

Meanwhile, the Quasi-Experimental Research Design also aims to examine causal effects, but it does not involve random assignment. In quasi-experiments, respondent groups are usually preexisting, making random allocation impractical. Researchers still apply treatments to one group and make comparisons, but external variables cannot be controlled as strictly as in actual experiments. This makes quasi-experiments more susceptible to confounding influences. Nonetheless, Creswell (2008) notes that quasi-experimental designs remain highly relevant and are often chosen in educational or social research when random assignment is either not feasible or unethical. Thus, both designs assess the impact of a treatment but differ in their level of control and group selection methods.

3.3 Population and Sample Design

3.3.1 Population

According to Sugiyono (2017), a population refers to the entire scope or group that becomes the target of generalization in a study, consisting of objects or

subjects with specific characteristics predetermined by the researcher. This definition implies that a population is not merely calculated based on the number of individuals but encompasses all parties who possess characteristics aligned with the focus of the study.

Meanwhile, Sekaran and Bougie (2016) describe a population as the complete set of individuals, events, or other elements that are of interest to the researcher and from which research findings will be generalized. In other words, the population must have attributes that align with the variables being studied so that the conclusions can accurately represent actual conditions and serve as a valid basis for generalization.

The population of this study consists of back-office employees working in fashion retail companies located in major urban business centers in Indonesia, where retail operations and coordination demands are most concentrated.

Back-office employees were selected as respondents because their roles involve intensive coordination, administrative accuracy, and operational decision-making, making them relevant for examining psychological factors related to work engagement and job performance. The employees that work in the fashion retail industry who have been employed for a minimum of one year in the same company.

3.3.2 Sample

According to Creswell, a sample is a subset of the population selected to represent the entire group being studied. He explains that in quantitative research, samples are used when collecting data from all population members is not feasible, thus requiring a selected group of respondents who reflect the characteristics of the population. Creswell emphasizes that the quality of the sample determines the extent to which research findings can be generalized, as the sample serves as a representation that enables efficient measurement, hypothesis testing, and statistical analysis.

Because a sample is part of the population, the sampling process must consider the appropriate method, population characteristics, and research objectives so that the collected data accurately reflect the phenomenon being examined. In this study, the researchers refer to the theory proposed by Bentler and Chou (1987), which states that sample size in quantitative research involving multivariate analysis can be determined based on the number of parameters or indicators in the model. They suggest that a minimum of five respondents is required for each estimated parameter. This rule of thumb is commonly used in survey-based and structural analysis research when researchers do not have specific sample-size calculations.

Based on this theory, using a coefficient of 5 and N representing the number of indicators in the survey, the calculation is as follows:

$$X = N * 5$$
$$X = 28 * 5$$
$$X = 140 \text{ samples}$$

Therefore, the required and obtained number of samples in this study is 140 respondents.

3.3.3 Sampling Technique

Creswell (2012) explains that a sampling technique is the method by which researchers select a portion of the population that is considered capable of providing the information needed for the study. This process ensures that the collected data still represent the characteristics of the population without examining every member. According to Creswell, proper sample selection is crucial for ensuring that the results provide an accurate picture of the broader population, making methodological decisions about respondent selection essential in quantitative research.

Creswell categorizes sampling techniques in quantitative studies into two main types: probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

1. Probability Sampling
    a. Simple Random Sampling

        Simple random sampling is the most basic form of probability sampling, where every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected—typically using a lottery method or computer-based random selection. This method requires a complete sampling frame so that the selection process can be carried out systematically. Its advantages include simplicity and strong statistical foundations for population parameter estimation; its limitations arise when the population is highly heterogeneous or geographically dispersed, making it costly or impractical.

    b. Stratifies Random Sampling

        Stratified sampling divides the population into homogeneous groups (strata) based on essential characteristics, then draws random samples from each stratum. The purpose of this division is to ensure proportional representation of relevant subgroups, resulting in more accurate population estimates and reduced variance. This method is efficient when researchers require detailed insights into each subgroup or when inter-group differences may impact the findings.

    c. Cluster Sampling

        Cluster sampling selects group units (clusters) in the first stage, then samples are drawn from selected clusters. This method is effective when individual-level sampling frames are unavailable, but cluster lists exist, or when logistical or cost constraints require grouping. Although efficient in time

and expense, cluster sampling tends to increase variance, which must be accounted for in the research design and analysis.

2. Non-Probability Sampling

   a. Purposive Sampling

      Purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting respondents considered most relevant and informative in addressing the research problem. Selection is based on clear criteria, such as job position (e.g., back-office roles), a minimum of one year of work experience, or specific responsibilities, ensuring that the sample aligns with the study's context. This technique is suitable for research targeting specific groups or phenomena within particular subpopulations. Although it does not allow for statistical generalization, purposive sampling provides high relevance and efficiency in data gathering.

   b. Convenience Sampling

      Convenience sampling involves selecting respondents who are most easily accessible to the researcher. Its advantages include speed, low cost, and practicality, making it common during exploratory stages or when resources are limited. However, because sampling is based on accessibility rather than representation, results are prone to bias and may not reflect the broader population.

   c. Snowball Sampling

      Snowball sampling is proper when the target population is difficult to identify or locate. The researcher begins with a few key informants and asks them to recommend others

who meet the specified criteria. This technique leverages social networks to progressively expand the sample. Its advantages include its effectiveness in reaching specialized or hidden groups; its limitations include potential network bias (homophily), where participants tend to recommend individuals similar to themselves, thereby reducing sample diversity.

3.4 Data Collection Technique

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), data collection techniques in research are generally divided into two major categories: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to information collected directly by the researcher from individuals or groups who serve as the primary data sources. In this method, researchers use instruments such as questionnaires, structured interviews, online surveys, or controlled observations to gather information relevant to the research variables. Sekaran and Bougie emphasize that primary data provides higher accuracy and relevance because it is obtained directly from respondents who are aligned with the research objectives. However, they also underline that primary data collection necessitates careful preparation, including the development of valid and reliable instruments and consistent procedures to ensure that all respondents are treated uniformly.

On the other hand, secondary data refers to information that other parties have previously collected for purposes unrelated to the current research. Secondary data may include organizational reports, internal company documents, industry publications, academic articles, government statistics, and public databases. Although not collected directly from research respondents, secondary data offers advantages such as time efficiency, accessibility, and contextual support for primary data. Sekaran and Bougie emphasize the importance of evaluating the quality, relevance, and currency of secondary data, as researchers have no control over the original collection procedures.

By understanding both data types, researchers can choose the most appropriate technique for their study. In quantitative research, both types are often used in combination; however, this study focuses primarily on primary data collection, using online questionnaires distributed to back-office employees in fashion retail companies to ensure alignment with the research variables and indicators.

To ensure data relevance, screening questions were included in the questionnaire to verify that respondents were employed in back-office roles and had a minimum of one year of work experience in the same company. Responses that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the analysis.

3.5 Operationalization of Variable

Table 3.1 Operationalization of Variable

No	Variabel	Operational Definition	Indicator	Sources	Likert Scale
1	Professional Self-Efficacy	Professional self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to carry out skilled tasks, overcome work-related challenges, and fulfill responsibilities effectively. In this study, the variable is measured by assessing the extent to which employees feel capable of organizing, directing, and	1. I can solve complex problems at work if I make the effort. 2. I am confident that I will be able to achieve the career goals I want in my current workplace. 3. I am capable of being effective at	Bernales-Turpo, et al. (2022)	Likert Scale (1-5)

		completing their work efficiently, based on the construct adopted from Bernales-Turpo et al. (2022)	work, I remain calm because I have the skills needed to deal with them. 4. No matter what happens at work, I am confident that I can handle it well. 5. When I am in a difficult work situation, I am confident that I can think through what I need to do.		
2	Life	Life satisfaction is	1. Overall, my life	Bernales-Turpo,	Likert Scale

	Satisfaction	understood as an individual's overall evaluation of the quality of their life based on personal standards. In this study, the variable is operationalized as the degree of life satisfaction that influences an individual's psychological readiness and motivation to work, following the conceptualization used by Bernales-Turpo et al. (2022).	is close to what I consider ideal. 2. I evaluate my current life circumstances as very good. 3. I feel satisfied with the life I am living. 4. So far, I feel that I have obtained the essential things that are meaningful in my life.	et al. (2022)	(1-5)
3	Burnout	Burnout, in this study, is	1. I often feel	Bernales-Turpo,	Likert Scale

		defined as a prolonged state of emotional and physical exhaustion that arises when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope. The variable is operationalized as the degree of reduced energy, motivation, and work effectiveness, following the framework described by Bernales-Turpo et al. (2022) in the context of healthcare workers.	emotionally exhausted due to the demands of my job. 2. I often feel drained when starting the day and thinking about the work I have to do. 3. I feel that my job is causing me exhaustion. 4. I feel that I am not making a positive impact on others' lives through my	et al. (2022)	(1-5)

			work. 5. I feel that I do not have many valuable accomplishments in my job. 6. I feel that I have become colder or less sensitive towards others since working in this role.		
4	Work Engagement	Work engagement is defined as a positive psychological state characterized by high energy, enthusiasm, and a deep sense of	1. I am able to remain productive even when working for long periods. 2. I make a strong	Bernales-Turpo, et al. (2022)	Likert Scale (1-5)

		involvement in one's work. In this study, the variable encompasses three core dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption, and functions as a mediator between psychological factors and job performance, as described by Bernales Turpo et al. (2022).	effort in carrying out all of my work responsibilities. 3. I am consistently enthusiastic when performing my job duties. 4. I feel excited about my work. 5. I am proud of the effort I put into my job. 6. When I am working, I become so focused that I do not notice what is		

			happening around me.		
5	Job Performance	Job performance is interpreted as the quality and effectiveness with which an individual completes tasks that align with organizational goals. In this study, the variable is operationalized through employees' tangible contributions to work outcomes and professional standards in the workplace, following the performance	1. I am able to plan my work so that it can be completed on time. 2. I am able to set work priorities effectively. 3. I am able to carry out my tasks efficiently. 4. I habitually start new tasks independently after completing previous ones.	Bernales-Turpo, et al. (2022)	Likert Scale (1-5)

		measurement framework used by Bernales-Turpo et al. (2022).	5. I participate actively in meetings or work-related discussions. 6. I communicate positive things about my job and my organization to people outside the workplace.		

3.6 Research Data Analysis

3.6.1 Validity and Reliability Testing

3.6.1.1 Validity Testing

In this pre-test, data were collected through a Google Form distributed across various platforms. Afterward, the researcher conducted data cleaning to remove responses that could compromise the overall dataset, resulting in 30 usable responses for the pre-test analysis. During the pre-test, the researcher identified several indicators that did not represent the intended variables; therefore, those indicators were removed from the instrument.

3.6.1.2 Reliability Testing

Reliability testing was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement instruments used in this study. This analysis aims to determine whether the indicators within each variable consistently measure the same underlying construct. The researcher employed Cronbach's Alpha as the primary reliability coefficient, where a value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable for demonstrating adequate reliability. If the reliability score for a variable met or exceeded this threshold, it indicated that the indicators were sufficiently stable and coherent to be used in the main study.

In addition to evaluating Cronbach's Alpha values, the researcher also examined the item–total correlation for each indicator to identify whether any item contributed poorly to the overall reliability. Indicators with item–total correlation values below 0.30 were considered weak and potential candidates for removal, as they may reduce the internal consistency of the variable. Through this step, the researcher ensured that only indicators with strong and consistent measurement properties were retained, thereby improving the precision and reliability of subsequent analyses in the full-sample dataset.

3.6.2 Research Data Analysis

Research data analysis was carried out to process, interpret, and draw conclusions from the data collected through the distributed questionnaire. The process began with examining the quality of the data, including checking for completeness and consistency of respondents' answers. After the data were cleaned and validated, descriptive statistical techniques were used to outline the characteristics of the respondents and provide an initial overview of their perceptions of each research variable. This descriptive analysis involved calculating means and standard deviations, and categorizing response levels based on the interval scale. Following this stage, the researcher conducted inferential statistical analyses to test the relationships between variables and to determine whether the empirical data supported the proposed research model.

3.7 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether the relationships proposed in the research model were statistically supported. This procedure involved applying regression analysis or other structural analytical methods, where each hypothesis was assessed based on its significance value (p-value) and the relationship coefficients between variables. A hypothesis is accepted when the p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. Additionally, the strength and direction of the relationship were evaluated through the magnitude of the regression coefficients or standardized coefficients. Therefore, hypothesis testing provides empirical justification for concluding whether the independent variables truly influence the dependent variables in accordance with the theoretical framework of the study.

3.7.1 Path Coefficient

Path coefficients describe the direction and strength of the direct effect between one construct and another. According to Hair et al. (2017), these coefficients may be positive or negative, and their magnitude indicates the

strength of the relationship between the variables in support of the proposed hypotheses. A higher path coefficient reflects a more substantial influence of the independent construct on the dependent construct.

The significance of each path coefficient is evaluated through the bootstrapping procedure, a non-parametric statistical test that generates t-statistics and p-values. A relationship is considered significant when the p-value is below 0.05.

3.7.2 Indirect Effect

The indirect effect refers to the influence of an independent variable on a dependent variable through one or more mediating variables. Hair et al. (2019) explain that indirect effects are used to determine whether a mediator can explain part or all of the influence exerted by the independent variable on the dependent variable. Mediation testing is conducted by examining the significance of the indirect effect generated through bootstrapping. If the indirect effect is significant, the mediating variable is considered to play an essential role in the relationship.

This analysis is essential because it allows researchers to understand the internal mechanisms of the relationships among variables—not only whether a relationship exists, but also how it occurs.