



The Relationship Between Job Insecurity and Work Engagement, with Job Satisfaction as a Mediator, Among Non-Permanent Employees

Andi Agung Prabowo^{1*}, Suryanto², Dyan Evita Santi³

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

Corresponding Author: Andi Agung Prabowo andiagungp@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to analyze the relationship between job insecurity and work engagement, with job satisfaction as a mediator, among non-permanent employees in the East Java Provincial Government. The study employed a quantitative survey design; data were collected via a questionnaire distributed to non-permanent employees across various government agencies. Data were analyzed using Path Analysis and Mediation Analysis with the assistance of JASP version 0.18.2.0 to test both direct and indirect relationships among the variables. The results indicate that job insecurity has a negative effect on job satisfaction, while work engagement has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction was found to mediate the relationship between job insecurity and work engagement. These findings provide practical implications for policymakers in designing strategies to reduce job insecurity and enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Employees are a vital driving force behind organizational success. Today, institutions not only require above-average competence but also individuals who are able to invest themselves fully and proactively in their work. A high level of commitment to work quality is a key factor in enabling human resources to perform organizational functions optimally and competitively (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Organizations require employees with high work engagement, which encompasses vigor, dedication, and absorption. Such engagement encourages individuals to work more optimally through a positive mental state oriented toward organizational success (Breugh, 2021).

Data from the East Java Regional Civil Service Agency (BKD) in 2024 show that the workforce composition consists of 54,021 civil servants (ASN) and 26,914 non-civil servants (non-ASN). The regulatory transition from Law No. 5 of 2014 to Law No. 20 of 2023 has triggered significant restructuring by abolishing honorary staff status and replacing it with Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) through a highly competitive selection process. This policy has generated a sense of injustice and profound job insecurity, particularly among employees who have served for decades but now face the threat of losing their employment status.

In addition to regulatory uncertainty, the phenomenon of mismatch between educational qualifications and workload remains widespread. The researcher identified cases in which graduates in Information Technology were assigned as personal aides, while administrative staff were burdened with financial management responsibilities. This role ambiguity forces Non-Permanent Employees (PTT) to accept additional duties beyond their formal capacity, which in the long term may trigger role confusion and hinder organizational efficiency. These psychological and structural conditions constitute a crucial challenge in human resource management within the Regional Secretariat of the East Java Provincial Government.

Job satisfaction is a crucial variable that is closely related to work engagement. According to Gallup's findings (Robbins et al., 2013), there are seven main indicators of job dissatisfaction, including stress, compensation, promotion, workload, job security, supervision, and coworker relationships. Martoyo (2007) defines job satisfaction as an emotional condition arising from the alignment between the rewards received and employees' expectations. Research on the sources of job satisfaction is highly important because it contributes to improving employees' quality of life (As'ad, 2004).

This study aims to analyze the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between job insecurity and work engagement. The main focus is directed toward the phenomenon of Non-Permanent Employees (PTT) in government institutions, where the limited number of PPPK positions compared to the number of PTT workers creates ongoing uncertainty. Through this study, it is expected that organizations will be able to formulate appropriate motivational strategies to minimize dissatisfaction, while also providing policy recommendations for more effective and equitable human resource management in the future.

Singh and James (2016) identified various factors influencing work engagement, including transformational leadership, organizational support, and procedural justice. In addition, job satisfaction has been shown to be a significant determinant of employee engagement (Jung & Yoon, 2015; Kertiriasih et al., 2018; Tepayakul & Rinthaisong, 2018; Wen et al., 2019). This study focuses on the impact of job insecurity on the work engagement of Non-Permanent Employees (PTT) following the new regulation. Referring to Shoss's (2017) proposition that job insecurity directly undermines job satisfaction, the researcher aims to examine how this uncertain work condition affects the emotional aspects and professional dedication of employees in government institutions.

This serves as the basis for the researcher to examine whether job satisfaction is capable of mediating the relationship between job insecurity and work engagement, whether job insecurity is related to work engagement, whether job insecurity is related to job satisfaction, and whether job satisfaction is related to work engagement.

Theoretically, this study makes a fundamental contribution to Industrial and Organizational Psychology by deepening the analysis of the mediating mechanism of job satisfaction in the causal relationship between job insecurity and work engagement. This study extends the application of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory in the context of non-standard employment in the public sector, where regulatory uncertainty functions as a job hindrance that destructively erodes employees' emotional engagement. This research strengthens the conceptual framework regarding how instability in employment status triggers a decline in psychological well-being, which systematically hampers professional dedication.

Practically, this study provides a foundation for the East Java Provincial Government to formulate strategies for mitigating psychological risks arising from the transition to Law No. 20 of 2023. The recommendations are focused on restructuring job placement in order to eliminate qualification mismatches and role ambiguity. By maintaining job satisfaction, institutions can ensure that the loyalty and performance of Non-Permanent Employees (PTT) remain optimal in delivering public services.

This study is crucial because it reflects the global phenomenon of precarious employment in the public sector triggered by regulatory restructuring. Job insecurity has become a universal challenge in maintaining work engagement amid modern bureaucratic transformation. By examining the mediating role of job satisfaction, this study offers strategic solutions for public organizations internationally to mitigate the decline in service performance and maintain the psychological stability of the workforce in an era of complex structural transition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work engagement is rooted in positive psychology as the antithesis of burnout, reflecting individual well-being and self-fulfillment at work (Rahmi & Cucuani, 2021). This construct is defined as employees' positive attitude toward organizational values (Robinson et al., 2004) as well as a strategic awareness to enhance collective performance (Endres & Mancheno-Smoak, 2008). Comprehensively, engagement encompasses dedication, energy, and cognitive-emotional absorption in one's work role (Schaufeli, 2013; Kahn, 1990). Engaged employees are considered valuable assets because they demonstrate high persistence and a deep understanding of organizational change (Dickson, 2008; Lockwood, 2008). Referring to Schaufeli et al. (2002), this study conceptualizes work engagement as a condition of emotional attachment and affective commitment that drives individuals to devote extra energy and enthusiasm for sustained organizational success (Towers, 2003).

Various perspectives on the dimensions of work engagement include psychological elements such as meaningfulness, safety, and the availability of resources (Kahn, 1990), as well as its position as the antithesis of burnout, involving energy, involvement, and efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

This study adopts the concept of work engagement proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2002), which consists of the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. These three components were selected because they are considered the most current and relevant in representing the work engagement of the research subjects. The researcher intentionally avoids Maslach's theory in order to focus the analysis on the positive side of employees' involvement in their work, rather than emphasizing the phenomenon of job exhaustion or burnout.

Ashford et al. (1989) formulated five main dimensions of job insecurity:

1. Threats to job aspects: Concerns about losing specific benefits such as promotion opportunities or salary.
2. Importance of those aspects: The extent to which the threatened benefits are valued by the individual.
3. Threat to the job as a whole: The risk of losing the job entirely, such as through dismissal.
4. Significance of the total threat: The magnitude of the negative impact resulting from job loss.
5. Powerlessness: The individual's low level of control in coping with the threat.

Luthans (2011) outlines five main dimensions of job satisfaction that determine an employee's level of job satisfaction:

1. Job Characteristics: The extent to which assigned tasks provide interesting challenges, opportunities for self-development, and professional responsibility.
2. Compensation System: Perceptions of fairness regarding the financial rewards received in comparison with the organization's internal standards.
3. Career Advancement: The availability of real opportunities for individuals to attain higher positions or roles.

4. Quality of Supervision: The role of supervisors in providing both technical assistance and emotional support in work activities.
5. Coworker Relationships: The condition of the social environment, including technical cooperation and moral support among team members.

The literature review indicates varying patterns in the relationships among job insecurity, job satisfaction, and work engagement. In the context of job satisfaction, several studies have found a significant negative effect of job insecurity (Nofaro & Azizah, 2024; Putra & Dewi, 2021), while other studies have reported non-significant results (Nemteanu et al., 2021; Triyono et al., 2020), and even positive relationships in certain industries (Hermawan & Riani, 2023). A similar inconsistency is found in the relationship between job insecurity and work engagement, where the majority of researchers report a negative correlation (Natalia & Prameswari, 2024; Subiantoro & Lataruva, 2022; Karatepe et al., 2020), whereas other studies have found no meaningful relationship (Khoiroh, 2021; Nikmah & Martdianty, 2021).

Regarding the variable of job satisfaction, much of the literature confirms its positive role in enhancing work engagement (Harini et al., 2019; Roseana & Dewi, 2023; Saputra & Bantam, 2023). Although Fatimah and Elistia (2024) found non-significant results in the retail sector, the study by Wiratama et al. (2022) strengthens the evidence that work engagement is closely linked to employees' emotional satisfaction. These differences in findings among researchers indicate the existence of a research gap that requires further examination regarding the mechanisms of interaction among these variables in different organizational settings.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of these three variables by positioning job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between job insecurity and work engagement. Unlike previous studies, this research focuses on Non-Permanent Employees (PTT) within the East Java Provincial Government. This focus is crucial for filling the gap in the literature regarding the psychological impact of regulatory transition on non-civil servant workers, while also offering a new perspective on how job satisfaction can mitigate the destructive effects of uncertainty in employment status on employees' professional dedication in the public sector.

METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this study uses a quantitative correlational approach to identify the relationships among independent, dependent, and mediating variables (Sugiyono, 2013).

Research Participants

The population in this study consisted of all Non-Permanent Employees (PTT) within the East Java Provincial Government, totaling 8,000 individuals (East Java Provincial Regional Civil Service Agency, 2024). Based on the inclusion criteria, the sample was focused on employees aged 27–42 years, with a minimum sample size of 367 respondents, determined using the Krejcie table at a 95% confidence level (Sugiyono, 2017). The sampling technique used was accidental sampling, in which data were collected through the digital

distribution of Google Forms via the General Affairs and Personnel Subdivision in each government agency.

Variables and Measurement

The Work Engagement variable was operationally defined as a condition of positive emotion, dedication, and full employee involvement that gives meaning to their role (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Measurement was conducted using a developed version of the Work Engagement Scale (WES) consisting of 24 items. This scale covers three main aspects: vigor (enthusiasm and persistence), dedication (role identification and enthusiasm), and absorption (full concentration). The instrument employed a 5-point Likert scale, equally divided into 12 favorable items and 12 unfavorable items. Scores ranged from 1 to 5, where favorable items received the highest score for the response "Strongly Agree," while unfavorable items were scored in the opposite direction to maintain the validity of participants' responses.

The pilot test of the Work Engagement Scale (WES) on 37 respondents showed item validity coefficients ranging from 0.312 to 0.547. Of the initial 24 items, 12 items were discarded, while the remaining 12 items were declared valid (Azwar, 2012). The reliability test, conducted through four rounds of Cronbach's Alpha analysis, produced a final value of 0.788, confirming that the instrument has stable internal consistency and is reliable for use in this study (Azwar, 2012).

The job insecurity variable was defined as employees' perception of powerlessness in maintaining the continuity of their employment (Ashford et al., 1989). The developed Job Insecurity Scale (JIS) encompasses five dimensions, including threats to job features and feelings of powerlessness. The item discrimination test showed correlation coefficients ranging from 0.259 to 0.762, with 14 valid items out of the initial 20 items (Azwar, 2012). The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.852 confirms that this scale is highly appropriate for measuring the level of job insecurity among the participants.

Meanwhile, job satisfaction was operationalized as an individual's general attitude toward various aspects of their job (Robbins et al., 2013). This instrument was developed based on Luthans's (2011) theory, which includes five main dimensions: salary, the work itself, promotion opportunities, supervision, and coworkers. The instrument employed a 5-point Likert scale with a balanced distribution of favorable and unfavorable items. All measurement instruments in this study were developed to ensure that the data obtained possessed a high level of cognitive and affective accuracy in accordance with psychometric standards.

The validity test of the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) on 37 respondents produced correlation coefficients ranging from 0.280 to 0.731. Based on Azwar's (2012) criteria, 13 items were declared valid, while 7 items were discarded. The reliability test in the second round yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.840, indicating that this instrument has excellent internal consistency for use in the research data collection process.

Based on the prerequisite tests, the research data showed a non-normal distribution, with a significance value of 0.008 ($p < 0.05$) in the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. In addition, the linearity test revealed that the relationships among the variables namely work engagement (WE), job satisfaction (JS), and job insecurity (JI) were non-linear, as all significance values were below the threshold of 0.05.

Considering these data characteristics, the analysis technique employed was Path Analysis, specifically Mediation Path Analysis, using JASP software version 0.18.2.0. This procedure was conducted to examine the role of the mediating variable in linking the independent and dependent variables. The analysis focused on the correlations among the dimensions of each variable to determine whether job satisfaction (JS) significantly mediates the effect of job insecurity on employees' work engagement.

RESEARCH RESULT

Respondent Demographic Data

Variables	N=406	%
Gender		
Man	277	68,23 %
Woman	129	31,77 %
Age		
Mean	34,68	
SD	7,57	
Range	34	
Min	20	
Max	54	

Based on the table 1, this study successfully collected data from 406 respondents, consisting of 277 males (68.23%) and 129 females (31.77%). The average age of the participants was 34.68 years (SD = 7.57), ranging from 20 to 54 years. These demographic data provide a representative overview of the characteristics of Non-Permanent Employees, who served as the primary subjects in the correlation analysis of the research variables.

Hypothesis Testing Path Analysis Among Variables

The results of the path analysis using JASP, as presented in Table 2, confirm that job satisfaction (JS) meets the criteria to function as a mediating variable. The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between JS and work engagement (WE), with a z-value of 5.511 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that H4 is accepted; the higher the level of job satisfaction, the stronger the employees' work engagement. Conversely, job insecurity (JI) shows a significant negative relationship with JS, with a z-value of -9.810 ($p < 0.001$), meaning that H3 is accepted, as a higher perception of job insecurity reduces job satisfaction. In addition, JI was found to have a significant negative effect on WE, with a z-value of -2.949 ($p = 0.003$), indicating that H2 is accepted. This suggests that uncertainty

regarding employment status directly diminishes employees' professional dedication.

Table 2. Results of Path Analysis Between Variables

Variables		Z-value	Sig	Information
JS	→ WE	5.511	< .001	Significant
JI	→ WE	-2.949	0.003	Significant
JI	→ JS	-9.810	< .001	Significant

Hypothesis Testing Mediation Analysis Among Variables

Based on the table 3, the results indicate a significant direct effect of job insecurity (JI) on work engagement (WE), with a z-value of -2.949 (p = 0.003). The analysis of the indirect effect through job satisfaction (JS) also shows a significant result, with a z-value of -4.804 (p < 0.001), indicating that H1 is accepted. Since both the direct and indirect effects are significant, job satisfaction (JS) is proven to function as a partial mediator in the relationship between job insecurity (JI) and work engagement (WE).

Table 3. Mediation Test Results Between Variables

Variables	Z-value	p	Information
<i>Direct Effect</i>			
JI → WE	-2,949	0,003	Significant
<i>Indirect Effect</i>			
JI → JS → WE	-4.804	< 0.001	Significant

Hypothesis Testing Path Analysis Among Dimensions

An in-depth analysis of the interdimensional relationships shows that satisfaction with supervision (JS-SPV) plays a central role as a positive predictor of all aspects of work engagement, namely vigor (Z = 3.595; p < 0.001), dedication (Z = 4.256; p < 0.001), and absorption (Z = 2.687; p < 0.05). In contrast, dimensions of job insecurity, such as the importance of job features (JI-JF) and threat to the total job (JI-TJ), consistently show negative correlations with employees' mental strength and dedication. This indicates that the perception of threats to employment status directly erodes individuals' energy and professional pride within the institution.

On the job satisfaction side, the findings reveal that the dimensions of salary (JS-SAL) and promotion opportunities (JS-PRO) are highly vulnerable to various forms of job insecurity, including feelings of powerlessness (JI-PWR). Satisfaction with the work itself (JS-WIS) was also found to decline significantly as threats to job features and feelings of powerlessness increased. Meanwhile, satisfaction with coworkers (JS-WC) weakened when employees perceived that the continuity of their position (JI-PJ) was becoming systematically threatened.

In summary, the results of the path analysis confirm that only the dimension of satisfaction with supervision (JS-SPV) consistently met the statistical requirements to function as a mediating variable. The role of supervisors in providing support and guidance emerged as a determinant factor capable of mitigating the destructive effects of threats to job features and powerlessness on employees' work engagement. Other dimensions that did not show significance ($p > 0.05$) were considered to have no strong contribution to the mediation mechanism within this population.

Hypothesis Testing Mediation Analysis Among Dimensions

The mediation analysis using JASP version 0.18.2.0 indicates that satisfaction with supervision (JS-SPV) functions as a crucial mediator. The results show a significant indirect effect between the perception of threats to job features (JI-PF) and the dimensions of vigor ($Z = -2.815$; $p = 0.005$), dedication ($Z = -3.100$; $p = 0.002$), and absorption ($Z = -2.310$; $p = 0.021$). Interestingly, the direct effect of JI-PF on these three dimensions of work engagement was found to be non-significant ($p > 0.05$). This finding confirms that JS-SPV performs a full mediation function. Thus, the negative impact of job feature insecurity on employees' enthusiasm and professional dedication is entirely determined by the extent to which they perceive the effectiveness of supervision within the organizational environment.

DISCUSSION

As an integral part of the government bureaucracy, Non-Permanent Employees (PTT) bear substantial responsibility as front-line public service providers. High public expectations, along with the intensity of direct interaction in various work programs, require PTT employees to consistently maintain a positive and psychologically sound mental state. Excellent public service can only be achieved when individuals possess strong work engagement, manifested through high enthusiasm, strong dedication, and deep concentration in carrying out their duties. This study specifically explored the factors influencing such work engagement, with the main finding indicating the partial mediating role of job satisfaction (JS) in the relationship between job insecurity (JI) and work engagement (WE). This suggests that perceptions of job insecurity not only directly reduce engagement but also indirectly undermine it by first diminishing job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous studies highlighting the negative correlation between job insecurity and job satisfaction (Nemteanu et al., 2021; Putra & Dewi, 2021). When PTT employees perceive their employment status as threatened, a systematic sense of dissatisfaction emerges, which ultimately causes them to lose meaning and emotional involvement in both administrative duties and public service responsibilities.

The dissatisfaction experienced by PTT employees often stems from existential concerns regarding income continuity and future stability. This phenomenon leads to cognitive distraction, in which employees tend to focus more on survival strategies—such as seeking alternative employment or striving to obtain permanent employment status—rather than concentrating on service performance. Supporting literature shows that job satisfaction functions as a primary catalyst for work engagement (Harini et al., 2019; Wiratama et al., 2022). Conversely, high job insecurity consistently reduces work engagement because psychological energy is depleted in managing anxiety (Natalia & Prameswari, 2024; Subiantoro & Lataruva, 2022). Further analysis in this study revealed more concrete details regarding the most influential dimensions, namely the perceived threat to job features (JI-PF) and satisfaction with supervision (JS-SPV). Significantly, JS-SPV was found to act as a full mediator in the relationship between JI-PF and all dimensions of work engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption). This means that threats to job features do not directly damage employees' enthusiasm if supervisors are able to provide appropriate guidance and support. In this context, the managerial role is not limited to technical correction, but also serves as a pillar of moral support and as a representation of organizational stability in the eyes of employees (Nemteanu et al., 2021).

The significance of supervisors in mitigating the impact of job insecurity can be explained through an organizational psychology perspective that positions leaders as moral pillars within the workplace. Employees who feel satisfied with the treatment and support provided by their supervisors tend to demonstrate higher resilience in maintaining enthusiasm and dedication to their work, even amid regulatory transition. Because supervisors are often perceived as the living representation of institutional policy, satisfaction with this relationship enables employees to become more immersed in their tasks and more protected from external disturbances. This concept is consistent with Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, which emphasizes that a positive reciprocal relationship between supervisors and subordinates creates exceptional work efficiency (Schyns & Day, 2010). On the other hand, the vigor dimension of work engagement is highly dependent on employees' perceptions of how central their job is to their identity and future career prospects. Expectancy theory explains that when individuals receive information threatening the outcomes they desire, their emotions are affected significantly, which then determines whether they remain productive or instead withdraw from their responsibilities (Snyder et al., 2002).

The dedication that Non-Permanent Employees (PTT) invest in their work is also strongly influenced by their subjective evaluation of the importance of job-related aspects such as career prospects, benefits, and the prestige associated with employment status. PTT employees are more likely to demonstrate full commitment when they internalize their job status as part of their self-worth, thereby generating a strong motivation to preserve that position despite existing pressures. However, external factors such as compensation remain crucial through the lens of equity theory. Employees continuously compare what they contribute with what they receive, particularly in terms of salary (Adams, 2015). In the context of PTT employees, satisfaction with salary depends greatly on the extent to which

the income is perceived as sufficient to ensure their livelihood amid uncertainty regarding employment status. Furthermore, based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), individuals possess a fundamental need for autonomy in order to experience satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Feelings of powerlessness (JI-PWR) caused by regulations that limit PTT employees' control over their employment future generate profound frustration, which in turn automatically reduces their satisfaction with the substance of the work itself. Threats to job features are perceived as barriers to autonomy, requiring employees to expend additional energy merely to survive within an uncertain system.

Finally, job insecurity exerts a broad impact on the dimensions of promotion satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, and coworker relationships. PTT employees tend to become skeptical about career development opportunities when crucial aspects of their current work are under threat or on the verge of elimination. The increasingly imminent implementation of new regulations creates collective anxiety over the potential permanent loss of employment status and livelihood. Once again, supervisors become a central point, as dissatisfaction with supervision is likely to intensify when employees perceive that their supervisors lack either the influence or the willingness to protect the continuity of their work from dismissal threats (Nemteanu et al., 2021). Moreover, this crisis situation may also undermine social cohesion among employees. Dissatisfaction with coworkers is often triggered by social comparison processes, in which individuals instinctively compare their fate, status, and capabilities with those of their colleagues amid the threat of job elimination (Festinger, 1957). Overall, this study confirms that in order to maintain the work engagement of PTT employees during this transitional period, the government must not only pay attention to regulatory stability, but also strengthen the quality of supervision and social support in the workplace to preserve employees' psychological stability.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to analyze the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between job insecurity and work engagement among Non-Permanent Employees (PTT). As a pillar of public service delivery, PTT employees are expected to demonstrate excellent performance characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and deep involvement in their work. The results of the analysis confirm that job satisfaction functions as a partial mediator; job insecurity was found to be negatively correlated with both job satisfaction and work engagement, while job satisfaction showed a positive relationship with employees' work engagement.

More specifically, the dimension of satisfaction with supervision (JS-SPV) was identified as the sole mediator linking the perceived threat to job features (JI-PF) with all dimensions of work engagement. These findings suggest that PTT employees' concerns regarding changes in their employment status trigger dissatisfaction with supervisory practices. The systematic impact of this phenomenon includes a decline in psychological energy, the loss of professional pride, and a reduction in employees' concentration in carrying out their responsibilities.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proposes the following practical and academic recommendations: Policymakers should organize leadership training programs for the direct supervisors of Non-Permanent Employees (PTT) in order to improve the quality of supervision. In addition, it is necessary to establish regulations that ensure certainty regarding work-related facilities and benefits to mitigate the adverse effects of job insecurity.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future studies are recommended to expand the scope of variables by integrating individual psychological factors such as self-efficacy, resilience, and self-esteem in order to enrich the analysis of the determinants of work engagement.

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