



Job insecurity and job experience on salesperson performance mediated by work engagement

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ABSTRACT

Sales performance differs notably among individuals, yet each salesperson plays a crucial role in achieving organizational targets. These differences can be influenced by various factors, including job insecurity and job experience. This study investigates how job insecurity and job experience affect job performance, with work engagement as a mediating factor, focusing on car salespersons in Kebumen Regency. Using a quantitative approach and Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), data were collected from 62 respondents. The results reveal that job insecurity has no significant impact on work engagement or job performance. In contrast, job experience positively and significantly affects both work engagement and performance. Mediation analysis shows that work engagement significantly mediates the effect of job experience on performance, but not for job insecurity. These findings highlight that while work engagement can amplify the benefits of job experience, it does not counteract the negative effects of job insecurity. Managers are thus advised to enhance work engagement and leverage employees' experience to boost overall sales outcomes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are a key element affecting whether a change process succeeds or fails within an organization or company (Arijanto et al., 2020).

The caliber and capability of the workforce greatly influence individual performance, which ultimately has a direct impact on the achievement of corporate goals. Consequently, effective human resource management becomes a crucial factor in improving organizational performance. This condition is particularly visible in the automotive sector, in which human resource quality plays a strategic role in supporting economic expansion.

In automobile sales environments, sales personnel play a crucial role as the direct link between producers and consumers. Their performance not only reflects the effectiveness of marketing strategies but also serves as an important indicator in measuring market penetration. The researcher conducted preliminary observations

through interviews with several car salespersons in the Kebumen area. These interviews were conducted to explore various factors that may affect employees' performance. It was found that vehicle sales had declined, and this condition was further exacerbated by the high level of competition among dealers, which increased the pressure to achieve sales targets. This situation had a direct impact on contract-based salespersons. They felt concerned about their job continuity, particularly regarding the possibility of their contracts not being renewed if they failed to meet the sales targets within a given period. This condition reflects the presence of job insecurity, namely a sense of uncertainty about future employment due to external pressures and organizational unpredictability.

This decline in salesperson performance constitutes an urgent managerial issue, as contract-based salespersons' employment continuity is directly tied to short-term sales outcomes. Failure to achieve targets increases the risk of contract non-renewal, making performance deterioration not only an organizational concern but also a personal employment threat. Under such conditions, job insecurity emerges as a salient psychological factor that potentially undermines sustained performance.

Furthermore, because their employment status is still contractual, most of these salespersons also do not yet have adequate work experience. Many of them are fresh graduates and have been working as salespersons for less than three years. This limited experience affects their ability to master sales strategies, build customer relationships, and manage the follow-up process effectively. Thus, low job experience becomes one of the factors contributing to their suboptimal performance. Limited experience coupled with job insecurity may reduce enthusiasm and commitment to work. Therefore, it is important to examine how job insecurity and job experience influence performance.

This condition gives rise to a significant phenomenon of job insecurity among workers, particularly in the car sales profession. Job insecurity refers to the anxiety and uncertainty that employees feel regarding the continuity of their employment in the future. It is a psychological condition in which individuals feel worried about the possibility of losing their jobs. This uncertainty arises from concerns that their presence and contribution in the workplace are no longer considered important by the organization. Such situations are viewed as a common aspect of the dynamics of modern work life (Ainun Shifa, 2021)

Job insecurity is the extent to which an employee perceives a threat to the continuity of their employment and feels that they do not have the control or ability to change or resolve the situation, job insecurity may be caused by various factors, ranging from macroeconomic conditions such as recessions or industrial downturns, to internal organizational changes such as restructuring. In addition, interpersonal factors and working conditions, such as short-term contracts, may also trigger feelings of insecurity about one's job. This insecurity may even arise for reasons that are not entirely rational, such as worries based on a personal tendency to feel vulnerable rather than on objective facts (Gea, 2019).

Empirical findings on the link between job insecurity and employee performance have been inconsistent, found that job insecurity has no significant effect on performance, implying that concerns about job stability may not strongly shape employees' work outcomes (Pawestri, 2017). In contrast, discovered that job insecurity, combined with compensation, positively and significantly affects employee performance, suggesting that a higher perception of job insecurity could motivate employees to increase their work effort (Al Amin & Pancasasti, 2021). Another study reported a different result, stating that job insecurity negatively affects performance because when employees feel uncertain about their job future, they experience emotional and mental instability, which in turn disrupts focus and productivity (Schumacher et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, job experience is also an important factor that can influence an individual's performance. Extensive work experience shapes employees' competencies, skills, and knowledge, which ultimately affects work quality and productivity. Job

experience describes the duration of an individual's involvement in a specific occupation, which indicates the level of understanding and capability in performing job-related tasks effectively. Work experience reflects the level of mastery a person has over the knowledge and skills required in their job, and can be measured through the length of service as well as the level of expertise and understanding possessed. The longer a person has worked in a particular job, the more likely they are to have better experience and competence in that field (Syarief, 2024).

Prior research indicates that job experience exerts a significant and direct effect on performance, as extended tenure allows individuals to develop greater proficiency in their work, the higher their understanding, skills, and maturity in completing tasks, which makes their performance more effective and optimal (Jumawan, 2021).

However, (Tan, 2021) argued that job experience does not have a positive influence on employee performance because without strong work motivation, experience alone is not sufficient to significantly improve employee performance. Moreover, extensive work experience does not always guarantee high performance, especially when employees face psychological pressures such as job insecurity. Given these conditions, previous research has not conclusively determined the factors influencing employee performance, highlighting a gap that calls for further exploration of how job insecurity and job experience affect performance.

Despite extensive research on job insecurity and job experience, prior studies have predominantly examined these variables in isolation, resulting in fragmented and inconsistent conclusions. This study addresses this gap by integrating job insecurity and job experience within a single explanatory framework and introducing work engagement as a mediating mechanism to clarify their joint influence on performance.

To address this gap, the current study examines work engagement as a mediating variable that could clarify the relationships among job insecurity, job experience, and employee performance (Wang et al., 2015) reported that work engagement mediates the adverse impact of job insecurity on performance, especially when employees perceive organizational justice to be low.

Work engagement represents a positive psychological condition in which individuals are actively involved in their work, characterized by high levels of energy, dedication, and deep concentration, further explains that engaged employees fully invest themselves in their job roles by expressing physical, cognitive, and emotional involvement during the work process (Ainun Shifa, 2021).

This study integrates work engagement as a mediating construct to enhance the consistency of empirical findings and to elucidate the pathways linking job insecurity and job experience to the performance of car salespersons in Kebumen Regency. Accordingly, this study contributes novel empirical insight by examining how work engagement mediates the relationship between job insecurity, job experience, and performance among contract-based car salespersons in Kebumen Regency an underexplored context characterized by high performance pressure, employment uncertainty, and limited work experience.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

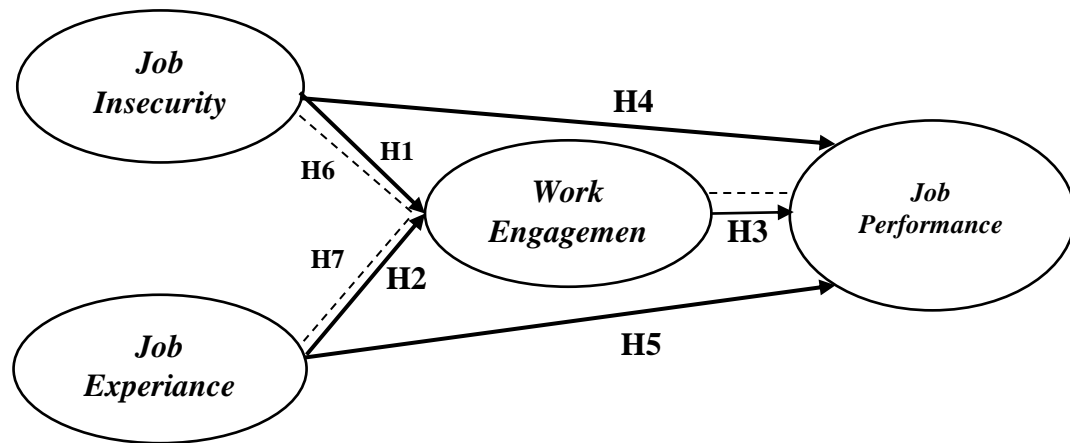


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

This study examines how job insecurity and job experience are related to job performance by considering work engagement as an intervening variable. Specifically, it analyzes the influence of job insecurity and job experience on both work engagement and job performance, evaluates the effect of work engagement on performance, and explores the indirect relationships between job insecurity and job experience and job performance through work engagement.

A quantitative research design with a descriptive approach was used. Primary data were collected via a structured questionnaire distributed to the respondents. Quantitative methods were applied to test the hypotheses, including sample selection, use of research instruments, and statistical analysis. The descriptive approach helped summarize and interpret the results without making broad generalizations.

The respondents were car salespersons in Kebumen Regency, selected due to their active involvement in sales, making them relevant for studying job insecurity, job experience, work engagement, and job performance. The selection of contract-based car salespersons in Kebumen Regency as the research context is grounded in scientific considerations. Contract salespersons are exposed to relatively high levels of job insecurity due to temporary employment arrangements and performance-based contract renewal systems. Moreover, the automotive sales sector is characterized by intense performance demands and strong market competition, allowing salesperson performance to be observed in a clear and outcome-oriented manner. The diversity of work experience among respondents also enables an empirical examination of the roles of job experience and work engagement in shaping performance within a regional context.

All variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Respondents' characteristics and operational definitions of the research variables are presented in the following table.

Table 1. The performance of respondent characteristic

Age	Quantity	Percentage
>25	2	3,2%
26 – 35	18	29,1%
36 – 45	33	53,2%
46 – 55	9	14,5%
<55	0	0%
Total	62	100%

Source : Author's processed research data 2025

Based on the table, it can be seen that according to the respondents' characteristics, most respondents fall into the 36–45 year age category, totaling 33 respondents (53.2%).

Table 2. The work period of respondent

Work Period	Quantity	Percentage
<1	3	4,8%
1 – 5	20	32,2%
6 – 10	16	25,9%
>25	23	37,1%
Total	62	100%

Source : Author's processed research data 2025

Based on the table, the respondents' characteristics indicate that the majority have a length of service exceeding 10 years, accounting for 23 respondents or 37.1% of the total sample.

Data analysis was performed using SmartPLS version 4, applying the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach to examine the effects of transformational leadership style, work environment, and work motivation on organizational commitment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This This research investigates the impact of job insecurity and job experience on job performance, with work engagement functioning as a mediating variable. Data were gathered from 62 car salespersons in Kebumen Regency using structured questionnaires, and the analysis was performed through structural equation modeling (SEM) employing SmartPLS version 4 with the Partial Least Squares approach.

3.1. Reability

Reliability in PLS is assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability. A construct is considered reliable if the Composite Reliability value is above 0.7, and the Cronbach's alpha value is recommended to be above 0.7.

Table 3. Reability Test

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability
Job Experience	0,854	0,897
Job Insecurity	0,907	0,910
Job Performance	0,818	0,872
Work Engagement	0,813	0,868

Source : Author's processed research data 2025

Based on the results presented in the table, all research variables demonstrate satisfactory composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values, each exceeding the threshold of 0.70. This indicates that all constructs meet the recommended reliability criteria and reflect a strong level of internal consistency, confirming that the data are suitable for further analysis.

3.2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is assessed to determine whether the measurement model adequately distinguishes between constructs. This evaluation is conducted by examining cross-loading values, where each indicator is expected to load more strongly on its associated construct than on others. Referring to the Fornell–Larcker criterion, a construct is considered to have acceptable discriminant validity when the square root of its Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeds its correlations with other constructs.

Table 4. Fornel-Lacker Criterion Value

Variable	<i>Job Experience</i>	<i>Job Insecurity</i>	<i>Job Performance</i>	<i>Work Engagement</i>
Job Experience	0,798			
Job Insecurity	- 0,137	0,821		
Job Performance	0,418	- 0,183	0,763	
Work Engagement	0,632	- 0,170	0,580	0,755

Source : Author's processed research data 2025

The results presented in Table 4 reveal that all items achieve cross-loading values above the threshold of 0.600 and show the strongest association with their intended latent variables. Accordingly, each construct is well represented by its indicators, demonstrating adequate discriminant validity.

3.3. R-Square

The purpose of the R-square test is to evaluate how strongly exogenous latent constructs contribute to variations in endogenous latent constructs.

Table 5. R-Square Test Result

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
<i>Job Performance</i>	0,348	0,314
<i>Work Engagement</i>	0,407	0,387

Source: Author's processed research data (2025)

As shown in Table 5, the R-square value for job performance is 0.348, indicating that the independent variables account for 34.8 percent of the variance in job performance, while the remaining 65.2 percent is explained by factors not examined in this study. In addition, the adjusted R-square value for work engagement is 0.407, which means that 40.7 percent of the variation in work engagement is explained by the independent variables, whereas the remaining 59.3 percent is attributable to other variables outside the research model.

3.4. Predictive Relevance (Q Square)

Predictive relevance is assessed to evaluate the model's ability to accurately generate observed values using the PLS-Predict procedure, as indicated by the Q-square statistic. A Q-square value greater than zero signifies adequate predictive relevance, whereas a value below zero reflects weak predictive capability. In the context of the structural model, predictive relevance demonstrates how well the model and its parameter estimates reproduce the observed data.

Table 6. Q Square Test Result

Variable	Q Square	Description
<i>Job Performance</i>	0,042	Has predictive relevance value
<i>Work Engagement</i>	0,349	Has predictive relevance value

Source : Author's processed research data 2025

Based on the results shown in the table, the Q-square values for the dependent variables are greater than zero, indicating that the research model demonstrates satisfactory predictive relevance.

3.5. Hypothesis Testing Result

Structural model evaluation is conducted to explain the relationships among the variables examined in this study and is performed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) software. The assessment of direct hypotheses is based on the model output, including

path coefficient values and structural diagrams. A direct relationship is considered significant when the p-value is less than 0.05 at a 5 percent significance level and the T-statistic exceeds 1.960. The following section presents a detailed discussion of the hypothesis testing results.

Table 7. Results of Hypothesis Testing

	Hypothesis	T-Statistic	P-Value	Description
H1	JI → WE	0,526	0,599	Rejected
H2	JE → WE	8,054	0,000	Accepted
H3	WE → JP	4,668	0,000	Accepted
H4	JI → JP	0,623	0,523	Rejected
H5	JE → JP	3,809	0,000	Accepted
H6	JI → WE → JP	0,483	0,629	Rejected
H7	JE → WE → JP	3,545	0,000	Accepted

Source : Author's processed research data 2025

Based on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, this study shows that job experience acts as an important job resource that enhances job performance through work engagement. Experienced salespersons possess accumulated knowledge and skills that foster higher levels of engagement, which subsequently translate into improved performance. This finding confirms that work engagement functions as a psychological mechanism that converts job-related resources into positive work outcomes. In contrast, job insecurity does not significantly influence work engagement or performance, indicating that its role as a job demand is weakened by contextual factors. In a contract-based sales environment, job insecurity may be perceived as a normal employment condition and is further mitigated by performance-based incentives, perceived employability, and supportive supervisory practices. Consequently, job resources exert a stronger influence on engagement and performance than job demands within this research context.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that job insecurity has no significant impact on either work engagement or job performance. In contrast, job experience exerts a positive and significant effect on both work engagement and performance, underscoring its importance in improving employee engagement and outcomes. Work engagement itself also directly and significantly influences job performance. The results of the mediation test reveal that work engagement fails to mediate the effect of job insecurity on performance, while it plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between job experience and performance. These results suggest that employees' experience and engagement are stronger determinants of sales performance than perceptions of job insecurity. Practically, this implies the need for organizations to enhance employees' experience through structured mentoring and coaching programs and to foster a supportive, collaborative work environment to boost engagement and performance. However, this study has several limitations, including its focus on a relatively small sample of car salespersons in Kebumen Regency and the examination of only three variables: job insecurity, job experience, and work engagement. Future research is encouraged to include larger, more diverse samples and additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing job performance.

Based on these results, organizations are encouraged to focus on enhancing employees' work experience as a strategic pathway to improving performance through increased work engagement. Practical efforts may include structured mentoring and coaching programs, continuous skill development, and experiential learning initiatives

that strengthen salespersons' competence, confidence, and involvement in their work. Moreover, creating a supportive and collaborative work environment, accompanied by clear performance feedback and recognition mechanisms, can further reinforce work engagement and contribute to sustainable performance improvement.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The research is limited to a relatively small sample of car salespersons in Kebumen Regency, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the model only incorporates three variables job insecurity, job experience, and work engagement while other psychological and organizational factors may also influence job performance. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to employ larger and more diverse samples across different sectors and regions, as well as to extend the research model by including additional variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, and leadership style to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of employee performance.

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