

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WORK MOTIVATION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK ENGAGEMENT AND JOB PERFORMANCE (STUDY ON EMPLOYEES OF PT PLN INDONESIA POWER UBP SAGULING)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the direct and indirect relationships between work engagement and job performance by considering work motivation as a potential mediator among employees of PT PLN Indonesia Power UBP Saguling, addressing an empirical inconsistency in prior studies regarding the mediating role of work motivation and identifying whether this mechanism generalizes to a high-risk, highly regulated operational context.

A quantitative explanatory design with census sampling was employed. From 154 returned questionnaires, 146 valid responses were retained after data screening and outlier removal. Data were collected using the UWES, WEIMS, and IWPQ instruments and analyzed with PROCESS Macro Model 4 using 5,000 bootstrap samples. The findings indicate that both work engagement and work motivation positively influence job performance. However, work engagement does not significantly predict work motivation, and work motivation does not mediate the relationship between work engagement and job performance. These findings suggest that work engagement and work motivation independently contribute to employee performance in a highly regulated electricity generation environment

Keywords: work engagement, work motivation, job performance, mediation

INTRODUCTION

Employee job performance is a critical indicator of organizational effectiveness because it reflects employees' ability to achieve expected work outcomes. In the electricity generation sector, operational reliability, strict safety standards, and continuous system availability make employee performance particularly important. PT PLN Indonesia Power UBP Saguling operates under these conditions,

requiring employees to perform within a shift-based system and highly regulated operational procedures. Accordingly, examining psychological factors associated with employee performance is essential in this organizational context.

Operational errors in this environment not only affect the reliability of the Java-Bali interconnected power system but also pose life-safety risks (Billinton & Allan, 1996). These characteristics create a

psychological work context that is fundamentally different from the manufacturing, banking, or education sectors that dominate the HRM management literature. In this high-risk organizational context, *job performance* is defined not merely as the completion of technical tasks (*task performance*), but also encompasses contextual behavior (*contextual performance*) such as willingness to assist colleagues during critical conditions, and the absence of counterproductive work behavior that could threaten operational safety (Griffin & Neal, 2000; Koopmans et al., 2014). Understanding the psychological antecedents of *job performance* in this unique operational environment is an urgent practical need.

This study addresses two interrelated gaps. International meta-analyses confirm positive effects of *work engagement* on *job performance* (Christian, 2011; $\rho=0.43$) and *work motivation* on performance (Van den Broeck et al., 2021; $\rho=0.31$). However, at the level of individual studies, results are inconsistent—some studies find that work motivation is not significant as a mediator (Wijayanti, 2025; Siahaan, 2019; study at PT Arezda Purnama Loka, 2023). This inconsistency indicates the presence of unidentified contextual moderating factors.

The integration of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker et al., 2008) and Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) assumes that the chain from job resources to engagement, autonomous motivation, and performance is a sequential chain that applies universally. However, this assumption was formulated based on studies in service and manufacturing sectors with relatively autonomous motivational characteristics. In high-risk work environments based on safety procedures such as PLTA, employee motivation may be more shaped by external regulation (safety obligations, operational standards) than by the psychological state of engagement (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Olafsen & Deci, 2024).

To operationalize the theoretical gap into measurable empirical phenomena, the researcher conducted a pre-survey of 30 employees from three units (operational, maintenance, and support) using negative statements based on the UWES dimensions (Schaufeli et al., 2006), WEIMS (Gagné et al., 2015), and Koopmans et al.'s (2014) scale (Scale 1–5; higher scores = stronger problem intensity). Results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Pre-Survey Mean Score (n=30)

Variable		Mean Score	Dominant Problem Indicator
Work Engagement (X)		3,78	“Working out of obligation” (Dedication dimension, score 3,83)
Work Motivation (Z)		3,82	“Working only to fulfill obligations” (External Regulation; score 4,00)
Job Performance (Y)		3,83	“Less willing to help colleagues when motivation is low” (Contextual Performance; score 3,93)

Source: Primary Data, processed with SPSS (2026)

Three critical findings from this pre-survey support the research argument. (1) External regulation dominance: the item with the highest score (4.00) in motivation is "working only to fulfill obligations" an indicator of external regulation in SDT.

This signals that UBP Saguling employee motivation is more controlled than autonomous. (2) Dedication deficit: the highest work engagement score (3.83) came from the dedication dimension with a compulsive character, not vigor (enthusiasm)—indicating "forced" or surface-level engagement. (3) Contextual performance vulnerability: the highest job performance item (3.93) is reduced willingness to help colleagues when motivation is low, consistent with SDT's prediction that external regulation produces minimal and inflexible performance (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Methodologically, this study further contributes by employing PROCESS

Macro Model 4 with 5,000-sample bootstrapping (Hayes, 2023), a resampling-based procedure that yields more accurate and statistically robust estimates of indirect (mediation) effects than the traditional causal-steps approach, thereby providing a more rigorous and precise test of the proposed mediation model in this high-risk operational context.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Work Engagement and Job Performance

Work engagement is measured through three dimensions: vigor (energy and mental resilience at work), dedication (sense of significance and enthusiasm), and absorption (concentrated involvement) (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), *work engagement* is a motivational mechanism through which job resources translate into positive performance outcomes. Employees who are highly engaged invest

discretionary energy, attention, and persistence in their tasks, resulting in superior task and contextual performance.

H1: Work engagement has a positive and significant effect on job performance.

Work Engagement and Work Motivation

SDT posits that positive work experiences, including psychological engagement, can nurture basic psychological need satisfaction autonomy, competence, and relatedness which in turn supports internalized, autonomous motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Engaged employees who feel meaningfully connected to their work are more likely to develop intrinsic and identified forms of motivation (Lussa, Sudiro, & Hapsari, 2023). *Work engagement* may therefore serve as an antecedent condition that elevates the quality of work motivation.

H2: Work engagement has a positive and significant effect on work motivation.

Work Motivation and Job Performance

Grounded in SDT, work motivation encompasses a continuum from amotivation to external, introjected, identified, integrated, and intrinsic regulation (Gagné et al., 2015). A meta-analysis of 99 independent samples by Van den Broeck et al. (2021) in *Organizational Psychology Review* found

that intrinsic motivation ($\rho = 0.31$) and identified regulation ($\rho = 0.27$) are consistent positive predictors of *job performance*. Kuvaas et al. (2017) further established that autonomous motivation quality not quantity determines performance impact.

H3: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on job performance.

Work Motivation as a Mediator

Integrating JD-R Model and SDT, *work engagement* may enhance *job performance* indirectly by first elevating work motivation quality, which then drives performance. This serial mechanism engagement fueling motivated, self-determined work behavior, which in turn improves outcomes has theoretical support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and has been confirmed empirically in non-industrial contexts (Destian et al., 2025; Bashir et al., 2020).

H4: Work motivation mediates the effect of work engagement on job performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

The total population of permanent employees at PT PLN Indonesia Power UBP Saguling was 154 employees, of whom 154 questionnaires were returned during the survey period, providing a basis for assessing the representativeness of the final analytical sample. This study employed a quantitative explanatory

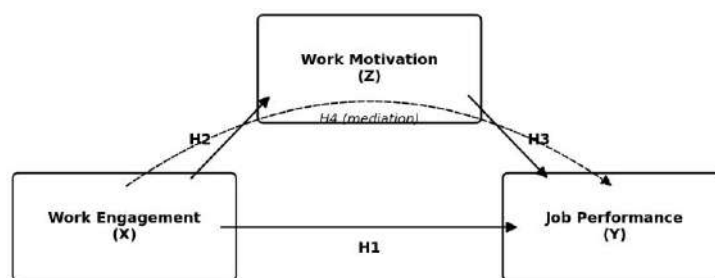
design to examine the relationships among work engagement, work motivation, and job performance. All permanent employees were included using a census sampling approach. Prior to hypothesis testing, the dataset underwent screening to identify incomplete responses, inconsistent answer patterns, and outliers. Eight observations were removed, leaving 146 valid responses for analysis. Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics and PROCESS Macro Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples.

Data were collected via an online questionnaire (Google Form, February–June 2026). Three validated instruments were used: (1) the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2006), 9 items, three dimensions; (2) the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS; Tremblay et

al., 2009), 12 items, six SDT dimensions; and (3) the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ; Koopmans et al., 2014), 18 items, three dimensions. All items used a Likert 1–5 scale.

Classical assumption tests confirmed normality (K-S sig. = 0.056 > 0.05 after outlier removal), linearity (all sig. Deviation from Linearity > 0.05), no multicollinearity (VIF = 1.015), and no heteroscedasticity (Glejser sig. > 0.05). Mediation analysis employed PROCESS Macro Model 4 (Hayes, 2023) using Ordinary Least Squares regression with 5,000-sample bootstrapping at 95% confidence intervals. The indirect effect (H4) was considered significant only when the Bootstrap Confidence Interval (BootCI) did not include zero (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



H1 : Work engagement has a positive and significant effect on job performance.

H2 : Work engagement has a positive and significant effect on work motivation.

H3 : Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on job performance

H4 : Work motivation mediates the effect of work engagement on job performance

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The 146 respondents were predominantly male (89.0%), aged 25–45 years (96.2%), held a Diploma qualification (64.4%), and had 5–10 years of work experience (62.3%). The majority worked in the Maintenance Division (52.1%), reflecting the operational intensity of hydroelectric plant upkeep. This profile is consistent with the technical-vocational workforce characteristic of the Indonesian power generation sector.

Validity and Reliability

Validity was tested using Corrected Item-Total Correlation ($r\text{-count} > r\text{-table} = 0.162$; $df = 144$, $\alpha = 5\%$, two-tailed). All 39 items across three instruments were valid. Two *job performance* items were borderline (Y.16: $r = 0.262$; Y.17: $r = 0.198$) but still exceeded the validity threshold; these borderline values are attributable to ceiling effects and social desirability bias inherent in counterproductive work behavior self-reporting (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha (threshold > 0.70).

Table 2 Instrument Validity and Reliability Summary

Variable	Items	r Range	r-table	Cronbach's α	Result
<i>Work Engagement</i>	9	0.527–0.649	0.162	0.726	Valid & Reliable
<i>Work Motivation</i>	12	0.497–0.565	0.162	0.739	Valid & Reliable
<i>Job Performance</i>	18	0.198–0.581	0.162	0.742	Valid & Reliable

Note: Two items (Y.16, Y.17) borderline; ceiling effect and social desirability bias acknowledged. Source: SPSS output, 2026.

Descriptive Analysis

Work engagement (mean = 4.17; High) was strongest in the Dedication dimension (4.28; Very High), reflecting employees' strong sense of purpose connected to UBP Saguling's strategic mission of supplying peak-load electricity to the Java-Bali grid a concrete, socially significant task (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004).

Vigor (4.11) was comparatively lower, consistent with the cumulative fatigue

associated with continuous 24-hour shift operations (Bakker, 2017). *Work motivation* (mean = 4.06; High) was dominated by External Regulation (4.44; Very High), reflecting the institutionally determined nature of work in a highly regulated environment where financial compensation and compliance remain primary motivators. Notably, *Intrinsic Motivation* (4.30) and *Identified Regulation* (4.26) were also very high,

suggesting motivational heterogeneity: some employees experience genuine intrinsic satisfaction from technical challenges.

Amotivation scored lowest (3.33), though its high variability (SD = 0.852) warrants monitoring as a burnout precursor (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). *Job performance* (mean = 3.97; High) was strongest in Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB, reverse-scored; 4.33; Very High), consistent with the safety-conscious organizational culture at PLTA

Saguling where CWB carries direct operational risk consequences (Griffin & Neal, 2000).

Hypothesis Testing PROCESS Macro Model 4

The overall model was significant ($F = 17.478$; $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.188$). An R^2 of 18.8% is consistent with medium effect size standards for organizational behavior research (Cohen, 1988) and reflects the inherent complexity of *job performance* as a multidetermined construct. Full results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results — PROCESS Macro Model 4

H	Path	β	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	Decision
H1	WE → JP (direct)	0.346	0.108	3.214	0.002	0.133	0.559	Supported
H2	WE → WM (path a)	0.158	0.099	1.594	0.113	- 0.038	0.353	Not Supported
H3	WM → JP (path b)	0.396	0.088	4.510	<0.001	0.222	0.569	Supported
H4	WE→WM→JP (indirect)	0.062	0.059	—	—	- 0.037	0.192	Not Supported

Note: WE = Work Engagement; WM = Work Motivation; JP = Job Performance. H4 tests indirect effect; BootCI [LLCI; ULCI] based on 5,000 bootstrap samples. $F(2,143) = 17.478$; $R^2 = 0.188$; $p < 0.001$. Source: SPSS PROCESS Macro output, 2026

a. The Effect of Work Engagement on Job Performance (H1 Supported)

Work engagement positively and significantly predicted *job performance* ($\beta = 0.346$; $p = 0.002$; CI [0.133; 0.559]), supporting H1 and confirming the JD-R Model prediction that engaged employees convert their psychological resources directly into superior performance. This result aligns with the meta-analytic

findings of Christian, Garza, and Slaughter (2011), who reported that *work engagement* predicted task performance ($p = 0.43$) and contextual performance across 91 independent samples. In the UBP Saguling context, the significant direct effect ($p = 0.002$) likely reflects the adequacy of operational job resources standardized equipment, structured safety protocols, scheduled technical training that

enable *engagement* energy to manifest directly as performance without requiring motivational intermediaries. For management, maintaining and strengthening these job resources is therefore essential to sustaining the engagement–performance pathway documented here.

b. The Effect of Work Engagement on Work Motivation (H2 Not Supported)

Contrary to theoretical expectations, *work engagement* did not significantly predict work motivation ($\beta = 0.158$; $p = 0.113$; CI [-0.038; 0.353]), failing to support H2. The near-zero VIF between the two variables (1.015) confirms they are statistically orthogonal not simply collinear.

Three contextual explanations are proposed. First, in highly regulated environments, motivation is primarily shaped by institutional factors (compensation systems, compliance requirements, procedural mandates) rather than by fluctuating psychological states such as *engagement* (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Second, the already-high motivation baseline (mean = 4.06) limits room for *engagement* to produce further incremental motivational gains. Third, the cross-sectional design may be insufficient to capture engagement–motivation dynamics

that unfold over longer time horizons (Olafsen & Deci, 2024).

This finding constitutes an important boundary condition for integrating the JD-R Model and SDT: this integration may not generalize to highly regulated industrial contexts.

c. The Effect of Work Motivation on Job Performance (H3 Supported)

Work motivation was the strongest predictor of *job performance* in the model ($\beta = 0.396$; $p < 0.001$; CI [0.222; 0.569]), supporting H3 with the highest coefficient among all tested paths. This result is consistent with Van den Broeck et al.'s (2021) meta-analysis demonstrating that autonomous motivation consistently and positively predicts *job performance* (intrinsic motivation $\rho = 0.31$; identified regulation $\rho = 0.27$).

The dominance of work motivation as a performance predictor exceeding the *work engagement* coefficient has direct practical implications: management interventions targeting motivation quality, particularly programs that support autonomy, competence-based career development, and acknowledged task significance, will yield higher performance returns than *engagement* programs implemented alone.

d. Mediation Test (H4 Not Supported)

Work motivation did not mediate the *work engagement–job performance* relationship (indirect effect = 0.062; BootSE = 0.059; BootCI [-0.037; 0.192]), as the confidence interval includes zero, failing to support H4.

This outcome is structurally explained by the non-significant path a ($WE \rightarrow WM$, H2): when the first segment of a proposed mediation chain is absent, the indirect effect is mathematically precluded regardless of the strength of subsequent paths (Hayes, 2023).

Substantively, the finding implies that *work engagement* and work motivation function as independent, parallel performance predictors not as a serial chain in this operational context.

Work engagement likely affects performance through alternative psychological mechanisms not captured by the WEIMS construct, such as heightened situational awareness, procedural compliance, or shift team coordination capacity.

Bakker and Demerouti (2017) note that the specific pathway linking engagement to performance outcomes is context-sensitive; this study provides contextually specific evidence for the power generation sector.

The non-significant mediation finding does not diminish the research's scientific contribution. In organizational behavior theory, identifying a boundary condition the contextual limit of a theoretical mechanism is recognized as an equivalent contribution to hypothesis confirmation (Bacharach, 1989; Whetten, 1989).

The managerial implication is clear: a dual-track intervention approach is recommended, simultaneously targeting *work engagement* (vigor restoration through shift fatigue management) and work motivation quality (autonomy-supportive feedback, competence-based career development), as both pathways independently and additively predict *job performance*.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the mediating role of work motivation in the relationship between *work engagement* and *job performance* among 146 employees of PT PLN Indonesia Power UBP Saguling, using PROCESS Macro Model 4 with 5,000-sample bootstrapping. Four conclusions are drawn.

First, *work engagement* positively and significantly influences *job performance* (H1 supported; $\beta = 0.346$; $p = 0.002$), confirming the applicability of the JD-R Model in the hydroelectric power generation sector.

Second, *work engagement* does not significantly influence work motivation (H2 not supported; $\beta = 0.158$; $p = 0.113$), identifying an important boundary condition for this theoretical relationship in highly regulated industrial environments.

Third, work motivation is the strongest and most independent predictor of *job performance* in this model (H3 supported; $\beta = 0.396$; $p < 0.001$), underscoring the primacy of motivation quality over motivation quantity.

Fourth, work motivation does not mediate the *work engagement–job performance* relationship (H4 not supported; BootCI [-0.037; 0.192]), indicating that both constructs operate as parallel rather than serial predictors of performance.

Theoretically, this study extends the generalizability of JD-R Model to a new industrial context (hydroelectric power generation), identifies a contextual boundary for the engagement–motivation mechanism, and provides methodological contribution through rigorous bootstrapping-based mediation testing.

Practically, management is recommended to implement a dual-track intervention: (1) addressing vigor depletion through structured shift micro-recovery programs (Sonnentag & Fritz,

2007); and (2) enhancing autonomous motivation quality through autonomy-supportive leadership, competence-based career development, and mission-significance communication programs.

Research limitations include the cross-sectional design, single-unit sampling, and potential social desirability bias in the CWB subscale. Future research should clarify and extend the present findings in three specific directions: (1) employing longitudinal designs to test whether the non-significant work engagement–work motivation relationship (H2) changes over longer time horizons, since the cross-sectional design used here may not capture such dynamics; (2) expanding sampling across multiple UBP units to enhance the generalizability of the boundary condition identified in this study; and (3) examining alternative mediating mechanisms, such as psychological safety climate, self-efficacy, or job crafting, that may better explain how work engagement translates into job performance in high-risk operational environments.

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