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The Relationship between Job Demands and Work Engagement among Employees

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Abstract

This study is grounded in the importance of work engagement in enhancing employee performance, as well as the observed phenomenon of low engagement potentially influenced by job demands. The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between job demands and work engagement among employees. A quantitative approach with a correlational design was employed, involving 110 employees selected through a total sampling technique. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires measuring job demands and work engagement, and subsequently analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation method. The findings indicate a significant negative relationship between job demands and work engagement, suggesting that higher job demands are associated with lower levels of employee engagement. Additionally, most employees demonstrated high levels of work engagement alongside relatively low to moderate job demands, indicating that existing work demands remain within manageable limits. The implications of this study highlight the importance of effectively managing job demands to foster higher levels of employee engagement. In conclusion, appropriate regulation of job demands plays a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing work engagement, which in turn contributes to improved productivity and overall organizational performance.

Keywords

Employee Engagement, Job Demands, Organizational Performance, Work Environment, Workforce Productivity.

1. Introduction

In the current era of increasingly dynamic global development, companies are required to adapt to various environmental changes in order to maintain competitiveness, enhance efficiency, and meet employees' needs and expectations. Organizations that fail to adapt risk losing market share, facing operational pressures, and even experiencing difficulties in sustaining their business. In this context, companies are not only oriented toward profit generation but also bear responsibility for creating value for stakeholders, including employees as key organizational assets. According to Dessler (2017), employees play a crucial role in determining organizational success; therefore, effective human resource management is essential to support organizational growth and competitive advantage. However, in practice, there are still phenomena indicating low levels of work engagement, characterized by a lack of enthusiasm, dedication, and initiative among employees. Robbins and Judge (2013) argue that low work engagement can negatively affect employee performance and overall organizational productivity.

The phenomenon of low work engagement is also evident from the preliminary survey conducted at PT Everbright, which revealed that employees tend to work merely to fulfill basic obligations, show limited initiative, and demonstrate low concern for work quality and timeliness. This condition is further supported by a case reported by money.kompas.com involving PT Indo Beras Unggul (PT IBU), where a breach of contract occurred due to product quality failing to meet agreed standards. This case reflects low employee engagement during work processes, as indicated by insufficient attention to quality, lack of initiative, and failure to achieve expected outcomes (Rai & Chawla, 2022; Guo & Hou, 2022). Work engagement is defined as a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2006). One of the key factors influencing work engagement is job demands, which refer to the physical, psychological, social, and organizational aspects of a job that require sustained effort (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Han et al., 2020). High job demands, such as excessive workload, time pressure, and emotional demands, may trigger work-related stress and reduce employee engagement.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated a relationship between job demands and work engagement. Anggraini and Mulyana (2022) found a significant negative relationship between job demands and work engagement, indicating that higher job demands are associated with lower levels of employee engagement. Similarly, Haikal and Sarah (2024) reported a negative and statistically significant relationship, suggesting that job demands substantially contribute to decreased work engagement. Nevertheless, a research gap remains due to differences in organizational characteristics and work environments, particularly in companies such as PT Everbright, which may have unique job demand dynamics. Moreover, prior studies by Mazzetti et al. (2023) and Naqshbandi et al. (2024) have largely focused on specific sectors, indicating the need for further research to examine the consistency of these findings across different organizational contexts.

Based on these considerations, the novelty of this study lies in examining the relationship between job demands and work engagement among employees at PT Everbright by incorporating specific empirical conditions, such as low levels of initiative, dedication, and work quality. The objective of this study is to empirically investigate the relationship between job demands and work engagement and to analyze the extent to which job demands influence employee engagement. The expected contributions of this study include both theoretical and practical implications. This study aims to contribute to the development of psychological knowledge, particularly in the field of industrial and organizational psychology, and to enrich the application of the Job Demands–Resources model. In practice, this

study is expected to provide insights for organizations in designing effective strategies for managing job demands in order to enhance work engagement, which may ultimately improve employee productivity, work quality, and job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory is a widely used framework in organizational psychology that explains how job characteristics influence employee well-being and performance. This theory classifies all job characteristics into two main categories, job demands and job resources. Job demands refer to physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of work that require sustained effort and are associated with physiological and psychological costs, such as workload and time pressure. In contrast, job resources are aspects of the job that help employees achieve work goals, reduce job demands, and stimulate personal growth and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Therefore, the balance between job demands and job resources plays a crucial role in determining employees' psychological conditions and work outcomes.

Furthermore, the JD-R theory proposes two underlying psychological processes. The health impairment process and the motivational process. The health impairment process explains that excessive job demands can deplete employees' physical and mental energy, leading to fatigue, stress, and eventually burnout. On the other hand, the motivational process suggests that job resources foster intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which enhances work engagement, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Job resources can function as a buffering factor that mitigates the negative impact of job demands on employee well-being and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Thus, within this framework, high job demands are generally associated with lower work engagement, particularly when not supported by adequate job resources.

2.2. The Relationship between Job Demands and Work Engagement

Job demands refer to the physical, psychological, and emotional requirements of a job that require sustained effort from employees. Within the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model proposed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), high job demands that are not balanced by adequate job resources can lead to work fatigue and a decline in work engagement. Work engagement is defined as a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. When job demands increase excessively, employees are more likely to experience work pressure, which reduces their energy, focus, and overall involvement in their tasks. Therefore, job demands are considered a crucial factor influencing employees' level of engagement within an organization (Zeng et al., 2022; Okojie et al., 2023).

Previous empirical studies consistently support the negative relationship between job demands and work engagement. Mäkikangas et al. (2022) and Sypniewska et al. (2023) in their study on employees found a strong negative correlation between job demands and work engagement, indicating that higher job demands are associated with lower employee engagement. Similarly, French et al. (2023) and Susanto et al. (2023) reported a significant negative relationship among employees and a substantial contribution of job demands to the reduction of work engagement. These findings suggest that excessive workloads, time pressure, and emotional demands can significantly diminish employees' energy and psychological involvement in their work (Wu et al., 2023; Aysila & Kusmaryani, 2025). It can be concluded that job demands are negatively related to work engagement, highlighting the importance of effective job demand management in sustaining and enhancing employee engagement in organizational settings.

H1: Job demands have a relationship with work engagement.

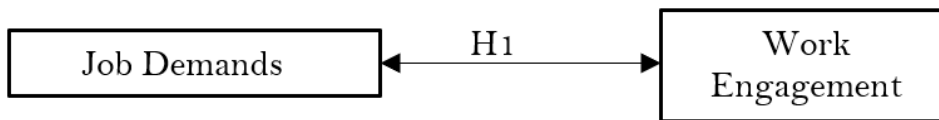


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the relationship between job demands and work engagement, where H1 represents the hypothesis regarding the relationship between the two variables. Job demands are aspects of work that require sustained physical and mental effort, such as workload and time pressure. Meanwhile, work engagement reflects a positive psychological state characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement in work.

3. Methods

This study employed a quantitative research design involving two main variables: a dependent variable and an independent variable. Work engagement was treated as the dependent variable, while job demands functioned as the independent variable. The population of this study consisted of 110 employees. A census (total sampling) technique was applied, meaning that all members of the population were included as research participants. This approach was selected to minimize sampling error and to allow for a more accurate generalization of the findings, as data were collected from all individuals who met the research criteria.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale. The instrument consisted of two measurement scales: the job demands scale and the work engagement scale. Each item was rated using a four-point Likert scale, which included the following response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). This format was chosen to encourage respondents to provide clear and decisive answers without a neutral midpoint. The work engagement scale was developed based on the theoretical framework proposed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), which conceptualizes work engagement through three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Meanwhile, the job demands scale was constructed based on the model introduced by Bakker et al. (2003), encompassing three dimensions: work overload, emotional load, and cognitive load.

To ensure the quality of the measurement instruments, validity and reliability tests were conducted. Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure (Azwar, 2013). Reliability, on the other hand, indicates the consistency of the instrument, meaning that repeated measurements under similar conditions would yield similar results (Yusuf, 2014). These tests were performed prior to the main data analysis to confirm that the instruments were both accurate and dependable.

The analysis of data in this research was conducted utilizing the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation method. This statistical technique is utilized to assess the strength and direction of the linear correlation between two variables that have normally distributed data. The analysis was performed with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Prior to conducting the correlation analysis, assumption tests were carried out, such as normality and linearity tests. The normality test was applied to assess if the data for both independent and dependent variables conformed to a normal distribution (Sugiyono, 2019). A significance value exceeding 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) suggests that the data follow a normal distribution, while a value below 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) signifies a non-normal distribution. The linearity assessment was performed to determine if a notable linear relationship existed between the two

variables (Priyanto, 2016). The association is regarded as linear when the significance value of the deviation from linearity exceeds 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). On the other hand, when the significance value is below 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the connection between the variables is regarded as non-linear.

4. Results

Prior to conducting further analysis, this study first presents a general overview of the collected data through descriptive statistical analysis. This analysis aims to provide preliminary information regarding the characteristics of the data for each variable, based on both empirical and hypothetical values. Empirical values represent the actual data obtained from respondents' answers, whereas hypothetical values indicate the possible score range derived from the measurement instrument's construct. By comparing these two sets of values, an initial understanding of the levels of work engagement and job demands among respondents can be established. The results of this descriptive analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Empirical and Hypothetical Results

Variable	Empiric				Hypothetical			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Work Engagement	55	92	79.59	7.871	23	92	57	11.5
Job Demands	40	60	49.03	3.425	26	104	65	13

Table 1 shows the descriptive comparison between empirical and hypothetical values for both variables. The empirical mean of work engagement (79.59) is notably higher than its hypothetical mean (57), indicating that employees generally exhibit a relatively high level of engagement, reflected in strong energy, dedication, and involvement in their work, with a moderate variation as shown by the standard deviation. In contrast, the empirical mean of job demands (49.03) is lower than its hypothetical mean (65), suggesting that employees tend to perceive job demands as relatively low, including workload, emotional, and cognitive pressures, with responses that are fairly consistent across individuals. These results indicate a condition where high work engagement is accompanied by relatively low job demands among employees.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Item	r-count	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Demands	JD1	0.642	0.892
	JD2	0.527	
	JD3	0.560	
	JD4	0.601	
	JD5	0.543	
	JD6	0.393	
	JD7	0.400	
	JD8	0.484	
	JD9	0.347	
	JD10	0.430	
	JD11	0.371	
	JD12	0.526	
	JD13	0.470	
	JD14	0.419	
	JD15	0.391	
	JD16	0.502	
	JD17	0.432	
	JD18	0.450	

Variable	Item	r-count	Cronbach's Alpha
Work Engagement	JD19	0.550	0.892
	JD20	0.295	
	JD21	0.534	
	JD22	0.495	
	JD23	0.313	
	JD24	0.430	
	JD25	0.517	
	JD26	0.425	
	WE1	0.368	
	WE2	0.350	
	WE3	0.398	
	WE4	0.395	
	WE5	0.554	
	WE6	0.265	
	WE7	0.383	
	WE8	0.407	
	WE9	0.620	
	WE10	0.550	
	WE11	0.432	
	WE12	0.504	
	WE13	0.493	
	WE14	0.625	
	WE15	0.386	
WE16	0.574		
WE17	0.570		
WE18	0.556		
WE19	0.454		
WE20	0.477		
WE21	0.262		
WE22	0.565		
WE23	0.474		

Table 2 presents the results of the validity and reliability tests for the job demands and work engagement variables. In general, most items on both variables have r-count values above the minimum threshold of 0.30, indicating that they are valid and capable of measuring the intended constructs. However, several items fall below this threshold, such as JD20 (0.295), JD23 (0.313), slightly above the threshold but relatively low, as well as WE6 (0.265) and WE21 (0.262), suggesting that these items have lower validity and are less optimal in representing their respective variables. Despite this, the overall instrument is considered reliable, as evidenced by the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.892 for both variables, which exceeds the minimum standard of 0.70. This indicates that the instrument demonstrates strong internal consistency and is appropriate for use in this study.

Table 3. Normality Test

Variable	SD	KS-Z	Sig.	p-value	Information
Work Engagement	7.871	0.072	0.100	p> 0.05	Normal
Job Demand	3.425	0.072	0.100	p> 0.05	Normal

Table 3 presents the results of the normality test for the work engagement and job demands variables. The findings indicate that both variables have a significance value of 0.100, which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that the data for both variables are normally distributed. In addition, the identical KS-Z value of 0.072 indicates that there is no significant deviation from a normal distribution. Since the

normality assumption is fulfilled, the data are considered appropriate for further analysis using parametric statistical methods, such as the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test.

Table 4. Linearity Test

Test	Result
Variable	Job Demands-Work Engagement
F-statistics	0.523
Sig.	0.914
Information	Linear

Table 4 displays the results of the linearity test between job demands and work engagement. The findings indicate an F-statistic of 0.523 and a significance level of 0.914, which exceeds 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that there is no significant deviation from a linear relationship, implying that the association between the two variables is linear. Consequently, the linearity assumption is met, allowing the data to be further analyzed using linear statistical techniques such as Pearson correlation.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Test	Statistics	Result
Correlation	Pearson-Correlation	-0.580
	Sig.	0.000
Coefficient Determination	R	-0.580
	R-Square	0.336
	Adjusted R-Square	0.330

Table 5 presents the results of hypothesis testing using Pearson correlation analysis. The findings reveal a correlation coefficient of -0.580 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant negative relationship between job demands and work engagement. This implies that as job demands increase, employees' level of work engagement tends to decrease, and conversely, lower job demands are associated with higher work engagement. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R-Square) of 0.336 suggests that job demands account for 33.6% of the variance in work engagement, while the remaining 66.4% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. The adjusted R-Square value of 0.330 also indicates that the model demonstrates a relatively consistent ability to explain the relationship between the two variables.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.580$; $\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$) between job demands and work engagement among employees of PT Everbright. This indicates that lower perceived job demands are associated with higher levels of employee engagement, whereas increasing job demands tends to reduce employees' engagement at work. In other words, excessive job demands may weaken employees' energy, commitment, and concentration in performing their tasks. These results are consistent with previous studies conducted by Anggraini and Mulyana (2022), which identified a significant negative relationship between job demands and work engagement among employees, as well as Haikal and Sarah (2024), who reported similar findings. This relationship is also supported by the theoretical framework proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), which emphasizes the influence of job demands on employees' psychological conditions.

Based on the descriptive statistical results, employees demonstrate relatively high levels of work engagement and low to moderate levels of job demands, as indicated by the higher empirical mean of work engagement and the lower empirical mean of

job demands compared to their hypothetical values. This condition suggests that manageable job demands enable employees to maintain energy, dedication, and optimal involvement in their work. Furthermore, the hypothesis testing results reveal a significant negative relationship between job demands and work engagement, indicating that increasing job demands tends to be associated with decreasing levels of employee engagement. This finding is consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, which posits that job demands require sustained effort and are associated with psychological and physiological costs, thereby potentially depleting employees' energy and reducing their engagement when not balanced by adequate resources (Bakker et al., 2003; Sanjaya et al., 2025).

Job demands refer to all aspects of a job that require sustained physical and psychological effort and are associated with certain costs (Han et al., 2020). These demands may lead to stress when they involve continuous and intensive effort, such as high work pressure, inadequate physical working conditions, and emotional strain resulting from social interactions. From a psychological perspective, relatively low to moderate job demands enable employees to maintain their energy (vigor), demonstrate commitment (dedication), and sustain focus (absorption). This is in line with the concept of work engagement proposed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Sulaman and Santhi (2025), which suggests that optimal engagement is achieved when employees are not exposed to excessive work pressure and can effectively utilize their psychological resources.

The high level of work engagement observed among employees at PT Everbright may also reflect their ability to cope with job demands. Employees who perceive job demands as manageable tend to develop more positive attitudes toward their work and exhibit higher intrinsic motivation, allowing them to perform their tasks more effectively (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Wang et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024). Nevertheless, these findings should be interpreted with caution. The absence of employees reporting high job demands may indicate well-managed working conditions. However, it may also reflect perceptual bias among respondents. The use of self-report instruments increases the likelihood of socially desirable responses, particularly in formal organizational settings (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Li et al., 2020). This study employs a correlational design and is limited to a single organization, causal relationships cannot be established, and the generalizability of the findings remains restricted.

These findings reinforce the importance of effectively managing job demands as a key factor in sustaining and enhancing employee work engagement. However, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the correlational design only identifies relationships between variables and does not allow for causal inferences. Second, the reliance on self-report questionnaires makes the results susceptible to subjective bias, including social desirability. Third, since this study focuses solely on PT Everbright, its findings cannot be generalized broadly due to differences in organizational characteristics, work culture, and management systems. Furthermore, this study examines only job demands as a predictor of work engagement, whereas the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model highlights the role of other factors, such as job resources, in shaping employee engagement. Therefore, this study does not yet provide a fully comprehensive understanding of all determinants influencing work engagement.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that job demands are negatively associated with work engagement among employees. Higher perceived job demands tend to coincide with lower levels of engagement, whereas demands that remain within manageable limits are linked to stronger employee involvement, reflected in higher energy, dedication, and focus at work. These results suggest that work

conditions that do not impose excessive pressure can support employees' attachment to their organization. The implications of this study highlight the importance of effectively managing job demands, such as maintaining a balanced workload, fostering a supportive work environment, and promoting employees' psychological well-being. Through these efforts, organizations can enhance work engagement, which in turn may contribute to improved productivity and overall work performance.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The use of a correlational design restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions between variables. In addition, reliance on self-report questionnaires may introduce subjective bias, including the tendency of respondents to provide socially desirable answers. The study is also limited to a single organization, which constrains the generalizability of the findings to other contexts with different organizational characteristics. Therefore, future research is recommended to adopt more comprehensive approaches, such as longitudinal or experimental designs, and to incorporate additional variables within the Job Demands–Resources framework, particularly job resources, in order to gain a more complete understanding of the factors influencing work engagement.

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Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



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