



Understanding the Relationship between Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction in Retail Workplaces

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ABSTRACT

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The retail industry is characterized by high work demands, including sales targets, intensive customer interactions, and dynamic operational conditions that may affect employees' psychological well-being, particularly job satisfaction. This study aimed to examine the effect of work engagement on job satisfaction among retail employees. A quantitative approach with a correlational survey design was employed, involving 81 retail employees selected through purposive sampling. Work engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), while job satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). Data were analyzed using simple linear regression. The findings revealed that work engagement had a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ($R = 0.550$; $R^2 = 0.302$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that employees with higher levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption tended to report greater job satisfaction. Work engagement contributed 30.2% to the variance in job satisfaction, suggesting a meaningful role in shaping employees' positive evaluations of their work despite the demanding nature of the retail environment. These findings imply that organizations should strengthen employee engagement through supportive work environments, balanced workloads, meaningful work experiences, and employee development initiatives to enhance both employee well-being and organizational performance.

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INTRODUCTION

The modern retail industry continues to expand alongside rapid changes in consumer preferences, service digitalization, and increasingly competitive market dynamics. This development places considerable pressure on retail organizations to maintain not only operational performance but also the psychological well-being of employees who serve as the frontline of customer service. Retail employees are required to achieve strict sales targets, adapt to flexible shift systems, and manage continuous interactions with diverse

customers in demanding situations (Kumar et al., 2025). In addition, they are expected to consistently demonstrate friendliness, empathy, and professionalism while maintaining service quality. These conditions indicate that employee well-being has become an essential issue for organizational sustainability because psychological strain may negatively affect employee attitudes, service quality, and organizational effectiveness. One important indicator of workplace well-being is job satisfaction, which contributes to employee stability, organizational commitment, and work productivity (Cima et al., 2023; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2024). Therefore, understanding factors that influence job satisfaction among retail employees is important both academically and practically in supporting healthy and sustainable organizational management.

Despite the rapid growth of the retail sector, employees in this industry continue to face various psychological and operational challenges. The retail work environment is characterized by high workloads, repetitive tasks, customer complaints, emotional labor, and pressure to maintain performance consistency under dynamic operational conditions (Widjaja et al., 2024). Such conditions often increase stress, emotional exhaustion, and dissatisfaction among employees, particularly when organizations focus excessively on productivity without balancing employee well-being. In many cases, retail employees experience fatigue due to prolonged standing, long working hours, limited work flexibility, and demanding customer interactions. These conditions may reduce employee motivation and weaken their psychological attachment to work. According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework, excessive job demands without sufficient psychological resources can reduce positive work attitudes and decrease employee well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). Consequently, organizations need to identify psychological factors that can help employees adapt to demanding work conditions while maintaining positive evaluations toward their jobs. One psychological construct considered relevant in this context is work engagement.

Field conditions in the retail sector demonstrate that employees often work in highly dynamic environments requiring both physical endurance and emotional regulation. Retail workers are not only expected to meet operational targets but also to provide high-quality customer service despite experiencing pressure from sales demands and workplace routines. In practice, many employees must handle difficult customer interactions, multitasking responsibilities, and fluctuating workloads during peak operational periods (Kumar et al., 2025). These realities create emotionally demanding situations that may influence employees' satisfaction with their jobs. In Indonesia, the retail and trade sectors remain among the largest contributors to employment and economic activity, highlighting the importance of maintaining employee well-being within this industry (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). Furthermore, modern retail workplaces increasingly rely on frontline employees to maintain customer

loyalty and organizational competitiveness. As a result, psychological factors that help employees remain energetic, dedicated, and psychologically connected to their work become increasingly important. In this context, work engagement may function as an adaptive psychological mechanism that enables employees to cope with workplace pressures more effectively while maintaining job satisfaction.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that work engagement is associated with various positive organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, productivity, and employee well-being. Work engagement refers to a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in work activities (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli, 2021). Employees with high levels of work engagement tend to demonstrate greater enthusiasm, resilience, and emotional attachment toward their work. Bailey et al. (2020) found that engaged employees are more likely to experience positive psychological outcomes and maintain higher work motivation. Similarly, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2024) emphasized that positive work attitudes significantly influence employee behavior and organizational effectiveness. Other studies also indicate that engaged employees tend to provide better service quality and show stronger organizational commitment, especially in service-oriented industries (Cima et al., 2023). These findings suggest that work engagement plays an important role in shaping positive employee experiences in the workplace and may contribute significantly to job satisfaction within demanding work environments such as the retail industry.

Although the relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction has been widely examined, most previous studies have focused on formal organizational settings such as education, healthcare, manufacturing, and office-based occupations. Consequently, limited empirical attention has been given to retail employees, particularly in developing countries where retail work is characterized by high emotional labor, operational intensity, and direct customer interaction (Bailey et al., 2020; Widjaja et al., 2024). Existing studies often emphasize general employee engagement without specifically addressing the unique psychological demands experienced by frontline retail workers. Furthermore, previous research has rarely explored how work engagement functions as an adaptive psychological resource that helps employees maintain job satisfaction under high-pressure retail conditions. This limitation creates a significant research gap because retail employees face unique combinations of physical demands, emotional regulation, and service expectations that differ substantially from other occupational sectors. Therefore, further investigation is necessary to better understand the role of work engagement in supporting job satisfaction among employees working in modern retail environments.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on work engagement as a psychological resource that helps retail employees adapt to operational pressure,

emotional labor, and customer service demands simultaneously. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined conventional formal work settings, this research specifically investigates the retail industry, which requires continuous emotional regulation and intensive interpersonal interaction. This study also contributes contextually by examining retail employees within a rapidly developing urban retail environment characterized by intense market competition and high consumer mobility. In addition, the study expands the application of work engagement theory into service-based occupations with complex emotional demands, thereby enriching the literature in industrial and organizational psychology. Understanding the relationship between vigor, dedication, absorption, and job satisfaction in retail employees is important because these dimensions may strengthen employees' resilience and positive work evaluations despite challenging operational conditions (Bakker, 2022; Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). Therefore, this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions to employee well-being management in modern retail organizations.

Based on the issues and gaps identified above, this study aims to examine the effect of work engagement on job satisfaction among retail employees. The study argues that employees with higher levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption are more likely to evaluate their work positively and maintain stronger job satisfaction despite experiencing demanding workplace conditions. Work engagement is assumed to function as a personal psychological resource that enables employees to cope with operational pressure, emotional labor, and customer-related challenges more effectively. This argument is supported by the Job Demands–Resources perspective, which explains that psychological resources can buffer the negative effects of high job demands while promoting positive work outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of work engagement literature within retail contexts and practically to organizational strategies aimed at improving employee well-being, service quality, and organizational performance.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational survey design to examine the effect of work engagement on job satisfaction among retail employees. The quantitative design was selected because it enables researchers to measure relationships between variables objectively through statistical analysis and standardized measurement instruments. A correlational survey design was considered appropriate for identifying the degree of association and predictive influence between work engagement and job satisfaction within a specific organizational context. Through this approach, data could be collected systematically from respondents and analyzed empirically to explain the relationship between the two psychological constructs under investigation.

The research was conducted in a modern retail workplace environment involving retail employees who actively interact with customers and operate under dynamic service demands. The retail sector was selected as the research setting because it is characterized by high operational pressure, sales targets, emotional labor, and intensive customer interaction, making it relevant for examining psychological factors related to employee well-being. The population of this study consisted of retail employees working in the selected organization. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) permanent or active contract employees, (2) employees with a minimum working period of three years, and (3) willingness to participate voluntarily in the study. Based on these criteria, a total of 81 respondents were included in the research sample. The selection of experienced employees was intended to ensure that respondents had sufficient work exposure and understanding of the organizational environment relevant to the study variables.

Data collection was conducted through direct distribution of self-report questionnaires. Prior to completing the questionnaires, respondents received explanations regarding the objectives of the study, procedures for participation, confidentiality of responses, and ethical considerations related to informed consent. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were assured that their responses would remain confidential and used solely for research purposes. Work engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al., which includes the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Meanwhile, job satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1997). All questionnaire items employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, allowing respondents to express the intensity of their perceptions regarding each statement.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The results indicated that the UWES scale obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.85, while the JSS scale achieved a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.91. According to Ghozali (2021), an instrument is considered reliable if it reaches a minimum Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70. Therefore, both instruments demonstrated very good internal consistency and were considered appropriate for measuring the research variables among retail employees. Data analysis was performed using simple linear regression to examine the predictive effect of work engagement on job satisfaction. This analytical technique was chosen because it allows researchers to determine the direction, strength, and significance of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable statistically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression to examine the effect of work engagement on job satisfaction among retail employees. Prior to hypothesis testing, several statistical assumptions were evaluated to ensure the appropriateness of the regression model, including the independence of residuals and model fit. The analysis focused on identifying the strength, direction, and significance of the relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction. The results of the regression analysis, assumption testing, and regression coefficients are presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE	R ² Change	p
M0	0.000	0.000	0.000	23.42	0.000	
M1	0.550	0.302	0.291	19.72	0.302	< .001

The results of the regression analysis indicate that work engagement has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ($R = 0.550$; $R^2 = 0.302$; $p < .001$). The coefficient of determination shows that work engagement explains 30.2% of the variance in job satisfaction among retail employees. This finding suggests that employees who demonstrate higher levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Furthermore, the reduction in RMSE from 23.42 in the null model to 19.72 in the regression model indicates that the inclusion of work engagement improves the predictive accuracy of the model. In the context of the retail industry, where employees frequently encounter operational pressure, demanding customer interactions, and emotional labor, work engagement appears to function as an important psychological resource that helps employees maintain positive work evaluations despite challenging work conditions.

Table 2. Regression Assumptions (Durbin-Watson)

Model	Autocorrelation	Statistic	p
M0	0.296	1.398	.012
M1	0.051	1.881	.594

The Durbin Watson test was conducted to examine the independence of residuals in the regression model. The main regression model (M1) produced a Durbin Watson statistic of 1.881 with $p = .594$, indicating that there was no significant autocorrelation among residuals. The obtained value falls within the acceptable range for regression analysis, confirming that the assumption of independent errors was fulfilled. This result indicates that the regression model

was statistically appropriate and that the estimated relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction was not biased by autocorrelation problems. Therefore, the model can be considered reliable for explaining the predictive relationship between the study variables.

Table 3. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
M0	149.167	2.883		51.734	< .001
M1	79.166	13.518		5.856	< .001
Work Engagement	1.668	0.317	0.550	5.264	< .001

The regression coefficient analysis demonstrates that work engagement significantly predicts job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.550$; $B = 1.668$; $t = 5.264$; $p < .001$). The positive regression coefficient indicates that every one-unit increase in work engagement contributes to an increase of 1.668 units in job satisfaction. The standardized beta coefficient also shows a moderate-to-strong predictive relationship between the two variables. These findings confirm that employees who are psychologically engaged in their work are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward their jobs and evaluate their work experiences more favorably. The significant t-value further indicates that work engagement is a statistically meaningful predictor of job satisfaction among retail employees.

Employees in the retail sector work under highly dynamic and demanding conditions. Retail organizations require employees to maintain service quality, achieve sales targets, and adapt to rapidly changing operational demands. In addition, employees are expected to continuously interact with customers while demonstrating friendliness, empathy, patience, and professionalism. These expectations create a complex work environment in which employees must manage not only physical demands but also emotional demands associated with customer service activities. Retail employees frequently engage in emotional labor, which refers to the process of regulating emotions in order to display organizationally desired behaviors during interactions with customers. Under such circumstances, maintaining psychological well-being becomes increasingly important because continuous emotional regulation may lead to emotional exhaustion and reduced work satisfaction if employees lack sufficient psychological resources.

From the perspective of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, customer demands, sales targets, workload intensity, and operational pressure can be categorized as job demands that potentially increase psychological strain among employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). When employees experience excessive job demands without adequate psychological support, they may become vulnerable to stress, burnout, and declining job satisfaction. Widjaja et

al. (2024) emphasized that modern retail environments are characterized by high work intensification, emotional exhaustion, and increasing service expectations, all of which may negatively affect employee well-being and service quality. Consequently, organizations need to provide adequate support systems such as emotional regulation training, supportive supervision, psychological assistance, and adaptive workload management to help employees cope with demanding work situations (Mukhtar et al., 2024). The current findings suggest that work engagement may serve as an important psychological mechanism that enables employees to remain resilient despite these pressures.

The findings of this study support the assumption that work engagement functions as a personal psychological resource that strengthens employees' ability to cope with workplace challenges. According to Schaufeli (2021), work engagement is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, which reflect employees' energy, emotional attachment, and concentration toward work activities. Employees with high levels of vigor tend to maintain physical and mental energy while facing demanding work conditions. Those with strong dedication are more likely to perceive their work as meaningful, inspiring, and valuable, while employees with high absorption tend to become fully concentrated and immersed in their tasks. These psychological conditions enable employees to maintain positive emotional states and stronger work motivation even when operating in highly demanding service environments. In the retail context, engaged employees are more capable of handling customer complaints, adapting to workload fluctuations, and sustaining positive attitudes toward their work.

The present findings are consistent with previous studies showing that work engagement is positively associated with employee well-being and job satisfaction. Bailey et al. (2020) found that engaged employees generally experience more positive psychological outcomes and stronger organizational attachment. Similarly, Hakanen and Kaltainen (2026) reported that work engagement contributes to employee resilience, positive emotions, and adaptive coping strategies within challenging work environments. Employees who feel psychologically connected to their work tend to interpret workplace demands as manageable challenges rather than overwhelming burdens. This positive interpretation may enhance intrinsic job satisfaction because employees experience a greater sense of accomplishment, purpose, and emotional fulfillment through their work activities. Therefore, work engagement not only represents a positive work-related attitude but also acts as an adaptive mechanism that helps employees maintain psychological well-being under stressful working conditions.

In the context of the retail industry, the role of vigor appears particularly

important. Retail employees frequently perform physically demanding tasks, including standing for long periods, moving continuously within the workplace, and working under rotating shift schedules (Mahfoudh et al., 2025). These physical demands require employees to maintain both physical endurance and psychological resilience in order to sustain service performance. Bakker and Demerouti (2023) explained that vigor reflects employees' ability to preserve energy and persistence when encountering intense job demands. Supporting this argument, Mazzetti et al. (2023) emphasized that stable physical and psychological vitality is essential for maintaining sustainable work engagement and job satisfaction in frontline service industries. Sethumadhavan (2025) further highlighted that employee well-being in service-oriented workplaces depends heavily on employees' ability to preserve positive energy and emotional stability while managing customer-related challenges. Therefore, the ability to maintain vigor may significantly influence how retail employees evaluate their work experiences and derive satisfaction from their jobs.

The results also demonstrate that work engagement explains only part of the variance in job satisfaction, as indicated by the R^2 value of 30.2%. This finding implies that approximately 69.8% of the variance in job satisfaction is influenced by other organizational, interpersonal, and psychological factors not included in the present model. Job satisfaction is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct influenced by compensation systems, leadership quality, career opportunities, social support, organizational climate, and perceptions of fairness (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2024). Therefore, although work engagement plays an important predictive role, it should not be viewed as the sole determinant of employee satisfaction. The moderate explanatory power of the model indicates that job satisfaction among retail employees emerges through complex interactions between personal resources and organizational conditions.

In retail organizations, several contextual factors may contribute significantly to employees' job satisfaction. Employees who perceive compensation systems as fair and transparent are more likely to evaluate their work positively. Similarly, opportunities for career development, supportive supervisory relationships, and positive workplace climates may strengthen employee satisfaction and organizational attachment. He et al. (2024) demonstrated that supervisory career support positively affects employee well-being by increasing career confidence and perceptions of future opportunities. This finding suggests that organizational support mechanisms may complement the positive effects of work engagement on employee satisfaction. In addition, Castaldo et al. (2023) found that internal corporate social responsibility practices positively influence job satisfaction among grocery retail employees, particularly in highly productive store environments. Such findings reinforce the idea that

organizational strategies aimed at employee well-being can significantly strengthen positive work attitudes.

The findings of this study also contribute theoretically to the development of industrial and organizational psychology literature by extending the application of work engagement theory to the retail sector. Previous studies have frequently focused on office-based, educational, healthcare, or manufacturing contexts, whereas retail work involves more intensive customer interaction and emotional labor demands. The current study confirms that work engagement remains an important psychological construct even in highly demanding service-oriented environments. Employees who possess strong psychological engagement are better equipped to regulate emotions, maintain motivation, and preserve positive work attitudes despite operational challenges. Consequently, work engagement can be viewed as an adaptive psychological mechanism that supports both employee well-being and organizational sustainability.

Overall, this study confirms the existence of a positive and significant relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction among retail employees. The findings strengthen the understanding that work engagement functions not only as a positive work attitude but also as a psychological resource that helps employees adapt to demanding work conditions within the retail industry. Employees who experience higher levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption are more likely to maintain positive evaluations of their jobs, sustain motivation, and deliver better service performance. These findings support the argument proposed by Albrecht et al. (2022) that engaged employees are more capable of experiencing meaning, satisfaction, and psychological well-being in their work. Therefore, organizations should consider employee engagement as a strategic factor in improving employee satisfaction, service quality, and long-term organizational performance.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that work engagement has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction among retail employees. Employees who exhibit higher levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption tend to evaluate their work more positively and maintain stronger psychological well-being despite the demanding nature of retail work environments. The findings highlight that work engagement functions as an important psychological resource that enables employees to cope with operational pressure, emotional labor, customer interaction demands, and sales targets more effectively. The study also provides an important practical lesson that improving employee satisfaction cannot rely solely on performance-oriented management approaches, but must also involve strategies that strengthen employees' psychological attachment to their work. In

practical terms, organizations are encouraged to develop supportive work environments through balanced workload management, fair shift arrangements, employee appreciation systems, emotional support, and opportunities for career development and competency enhancement. These strategies may help strengthen employees' vigor, dedication, and absorption while simultaneously improving organizational sustainability, customer service quality, and employee well-being.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of industrial and organizational psychology literature by extending the application of work engagement theory into the retail sector, which is characterized by high emotional labor and dynamic operational demands. The study strengthens the understanding that work engagement is not merely a positive work attitude but also an adaptive psychological mechanism that supports employee resilience and job satisfaction in service-oriented industries. Nevertheless, this research has several limitations. First, the study used a correlational survey design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships between variables. Second, the sample was limited to retail employees within a single organizational context, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings to broader retail settings. Third, work engagement explained only 30.2% of the variance in job satisfaction, indicating that other variables such as compensation, leadership quality, organizational climate, work-life balance, and supervisory support may also play important roles in shaping employee satisfaction. Therefore, future studies are recommended to include additional predictor, mediator, or moderator variables and employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of employee well-being and job satisfaction in the retail industry.

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