

Does Work Stress Mediate the Link Between Job Insecurity, Meaningful Work, and Psychological Well-Being?

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Abstract

This research explores the impact of job insecurity and meaningful work on psychological well-being, and further investigates whether work stress serves as a mediating factor. The participants in this study were 117 employees. Data collection was conducted using the Indonesian Well-being Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, Job Insecurity Scale, and Work and Meaning Inventory. The research findings indicate that, directly, job insecurity was significantly and negatively linked to psychological well-being. Conversely, meaningful work showed a significant and positive correlation with psychological well-being. Regarding the indirect associations through work stress, neither job insecurity nor meaningful work demonstrated a significant influence on psychological well-being. The findings of this study indicate that organizations need to reduce job insecurity and foster meaningful work as strategies to enhance employees' psychological well-being. Furthermore, the results highlight that interventions should not only focus on managing work stress but also strengthen intrinsic factors that provide meaning in work.

INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being is a topic that is often discussed and intriguing to explore, not only in recent times but this topic has been discussed from a long time, particularly by philosophers and religious experts (Diener et al., 2018). Some scholars argue that distress and psychological well-being represent two opposing poles of a single continuum, while others view them as separate dimensions. Empirical evidence indicates that although well-being and distress are negatively correlated, they also demonstrate significant psychometric distinctions. This supports the perspective that they should be understood as interrelated yet distinct constructs (Craig et al., 2025). If understood as a continuum, psychological well-being ranges from distress (negative) to psychological well-being (positive). Conversely, if interpreted as a distinct dimension, psychological well-being carries a meaning separate from distress.

Well-being is a complex construct, and current studies generally categorize it into two major perspectives: the hedonic perspective, which emphasizes well-being as the attainment of pleasure and minimizing discomfort, while the eudaimonic perspective, which focuses more on life meaning and self-development (Halem et al., 2024). From this viewpoint, well-being is assessed based on how effectively a person functions and develops over time. The hedonic approach emphasizes the pursuit of happiness and pleasure as indicators of well-being. This involves positive experiences such as enjoyment, satisfaction,

and joy. This approach tends to focus on subjective satisfaction and positive emotions. On the other hand, the eudaimonic approach emphasizes the pursuit of deeper meaning and purpose in life. It includes more meaningful experiences, such as a sense of personal achievement, autonomy in decision-making, positive relationships with others, environmental mastery, personal growth, having a life purpose, and self-acceptance (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

Besides the differences mentioned above, cultural aspects also play an important role in measurement, it shows by each culture perceives well-being differently (Maulana et al., 2019). The instrument used in this study is the Indonesian Well-being Scale, which was developed in accordance with the Indonesian context and culture with participants is outsourced employees working in a retail company. Outsourced employees work under fixed-term employment agreements. Although Government Regulation No. 35 of 2021 on the protection of outsourced employees requires the transfer of rights protection for outsourced employees in the event of a change in outsourcing companies, provided the job object remains, the length of contracts received by employees is often unclear, resulting in their employment status being uncertain. This issue significantly affects the psychological well-being of employees, ultimately impacting their work productivity and performance (Maulana et al., 2019).

One factor that influences employees' psychological well-being is job insecurity (Russo & Terraneo, 2020; Witte et al., 2010; Witte et al., 2015). Job insecurity can be understood as an individual's perception of concerns and uncertainties about the future of their employment insecurity (Witte et al., 2015). In addition to uncertainty and concerns about future employment, job insecurity is described as person's subjective perception of the probability of involuntary job loss (Sverke et al., 2002). From the definitions above, it can be defined that job insecurity is an individual's perception of concerns and uncertainties about their future employment, including the possibility of involuntary job loss.

Some employees may fear being laid off, even though there is no logical reason for them to be dismissed. Some employees may feel assured that their jobs are currently safe from termination; however, in the future, amid economic uncertainty, they may still face the risk of being laid off. The fear of job loss can significantly affect employees' psychological well-being. This is consistent with previous studies, which have demonstrated that job insecurity is negatively associated with psychological well-being (Jalil et al., 2023; Låstad et al., 2021; Ugwu et al., 2021).

Job insecurity is one of the important issues to be studied, as it is not only experienced at the individual level but can also be perceived collectively (Mauno et al., 2014). Furthermore, Mauno et al. (2014) put forward two arguments regarding this condition. First, organizational changes, such as mergers, acquisitions, partial business closures, workforce reductions, and layoffs, may affect both individuals and specific groups within the organization, thereby shaping perceptions of job insecurity at both the individual and group levels. In this study, factors such as government regulations, economic conditions, and company policies also make significant contributions to job insecurity, including the difficulty of obtaining permanent employment status, the prevalence of fixed-term contracts, and the possibility that, upon contract expiration, employees may be transferred to another company with the same contractual status and without any legal change.

Second, job insecurity can serve as a collective stressor, as employees spend time, engage in activities, and share experiences within an organization or work unit, leading them to learn to feel, think, and act in similar ways. It is therefore essential to understand employees' perceptions of job insecurity arising from government regulations and organizational policies, as well as how job insecurity affects work stress and psychological well-being.

The aforementioned phenomenon is highly relevant in the context of outsourcing employees in Indonesia, who frequently encounter contract uncertainty, limited access to social security, restricted compensation compared to permanent employees, and constrained career mobility. Such conditions make job insecurity a daily experience that poses risks of chronic work stress and reduced psychological

well-being. [Nopiando \(2012\)](#) found a negative relationship between job insecurity and psychological well-being among outsourcing employees: the higher the perceived job insecurity, the lower their psychological well-being. However, several studies indicate that job insecurity does not always have a significant effect on work stress. For instance, [An et al. \(2023\)](#) reported that work stress did not serve as a mediator in the relationship between job insecurity and anxiety. Similarly, the findings of [Ramdhan and Fajrianthi \(2021\)](#) revealed that the level of job insecurity among outsourcing employees did not significantly contribute to increased work stress. These results provide a strong foundation for reexamining the role of work stress as a mediating variable across different contexts and diverse participants. The findings also underscore the need for further studies to investigate whether work stress genuinely mediates the relationship between job insecurity and psychological well-being, particularly in the context of outsourcing employees in Indonesia.

Another factor that affects psychological well-being is meaningful work. Meaningful work can be understood as the extent to which individuals perceive their job as something that holds significant meaning and positive value ([Steger et al., 2012](#)). [Steger et al. \(2012\)](#) argued that meaningful work is not merely centered on the hedonic aspect (pleasure-oriented), but rather on the eudaimonic aspect (growth- and purpose-oriented). Previous studies have revealed a positive relationship between meaningful work and psychological well-being ([Golparvar & Abedini, 2014](#); [Mansouri et al., 2022](#)).

Previous studies have highlighted that work stress may affect psychological well-being ([Septiana & Suroso, 2024](#); [Sopacuaperu & Kristianingsih, 2024](#); [Syakina et al., 2022](#)). Similarly, meaningful work has an impact on work stress ([Landells & Albrecht, 2019](#)). On the other hand, job insecurity can be a predictor of work stress ([Lestari et al., 2020](#); [Medysar et al., 2019](#)). Stress is an individual's response to the pressures or demands of the environment, circumstances, and events that threaten well-being and disrupt the achievement of goals ([Cohen et al., 2019](#)). On the other hand, work stress refers to the experience of stress in the workplace. Work stress is used as a mediator variable because it can worsen the negative effects of job insecurity and potentially reduce the positive impact of meaningful work. Stress acts as an important link that translates workplace conditions into psychological outcomes, particularly psychological well-being.

Research on job insecurity and meaningful work has been growing, yet most studies still develop separately. Job insecurity is more often examined as a trigger of stress that leads to negative outcomes, such as counterproductive work behavior, while its link to psychological well-being through the mechanism of work stress has rarely been addressed ([Charkhabi et al., 2024](#); [Kim et al., 2022](#); [Pires et al., 2025](#)). On the other hand, meaningful work is frequently treated either as a direct predictor of well-being or as a mediator, without considering whether meaningful work may instead buffer stress and thereby sustain well-being ([Herr et al., 2023](#); [Jalil et al., 2023](#)).

This study offers novelty by proposing a mediation model that places job insecurity (as a demand) and meaningful work (as a resource) within the same framework, with work stress as the central mechanism leading to psychological well-being. Accordingly, the study does not only test the negative pathway (job insecurity – stress – decreased psychological well-being) but also the positive pathway (meaningful work – reduced stress – enhanced psychological well-being). Beyond its theoretical contribution by positioning psychological well-being as the primary outcome, the focus on outsourcing employees in Indonesia provides practical implications for labor policy and organizational strategies aimed at strengthening worker well-being amidst job insecurity.

This research explores the impact of job insecurity and meaningful work on psychological well-being, and further investigates whether work stress serves as a mediating factor. Specifically, this study aims to examine whether job insecurity diminishes psychological well-being through increased work stress, and whether meaningful work enhances psychological well-being by reducing work stress.

The hypotheses in this study are: H1: Feelings of job insecurity are linked to individuals' levels of psychological well-being, H2: Experiencing meaningful work is related to one's psychological well-being, H3: A sense of job insecurity contributes to increased levels of work stress, H4: The extent to which work is perceived as meaningful is related to the experience of work stress, H5: Work stress has an impact on an individual's psychological well-being, H6: The relationship between job insecurity and psychological well-being is mediated by the level of work stress, H7: The link between meaningful work and psychological well-being is influenced by the degree of work stress.

METHODS

Type and Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional design to examine the relationships between job insecurity, meaningful work, and psychological well-being among outsourced employees, with work stress as a mediator. Mediation analysis was conducted using JASP software to examine the indirect effects of job insecurity and meaningful work on psychological well-being through work stress.

Participants

The population in this study comprised 150 contract employees working at an outsourcing company in a shopping mall building located in the Karawang area, with a sample size of 117 employees. The sampling technique employed was convenience sampling, whereby participants were directly asked about their willingness to participate in the study and provided informed consent by indicating agreement or disagreement on the consent form included in the questionnaire.

Instruments

The Indonesian Well-being Scale (IWS) developed by Maulana et al. (2019) consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In this study, the IWS instrument was adopted from Maulana et al. (2019) without modification. This instrument comprises four core aspects of well-being: fulfillment of basic needs, fulfillment of social needs (social relationships), spirituality, and self-acceptance. Specifically, it includes four items for basic needs, six items for social relationships, five items for self-acceptance, and five items for spirituality. Based on Maulana et al. (2019) study, the overall reliability of the scale was strong, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.89$, while the reliability for spirituality is $\alpha = 0.94$, basic need fulfillment is $\alpha = 0.80$, acceptance is $\alpha = 0.79$, and social relations is $\alpha = 0.85$. The average variance extracted (AVE) ranges from 0.44 to 0.78, while the composite reliability (CR) ranges from 0.79 to 0.94. In this study, the Indonesian Well-Being Scale demonstrated a reliability $\alpha = 0.922$. The test results show a point estimate indicating excellent reliability, as it far exceeds the 0.70 threshold. The 95% Confidence Interval (CI), ranging from 0.893 - 0.945, also showed very strong internal consistency without significant uncertainty. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Indonesian Well-Being Scale has excellent reliability for use in this study.

Table 1. <Items Number From The Indonesian Well-being Scale (IWS)>

Dimension	Item Number	Total Item
Spirituality	1,2,3,4,5	5
Social Relation	6,7,8,9,10,11	6
Basic Needs	12,13,14,15	4
Acceptance	16,17,18,19,20	5

The Job Insecurity Scale (JIS) consisting of four items developed by De Witte (Vander Elst et al., 2014). Respondents are asked to rate these items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly

disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In this study, the JIS instrument was adopted from De Witte (Vander Elst et al., 2014) without modification. The Job Insecurity Scale has been tested in several European countries with a Coefficient α value exceeding 0.70 (Vander Elst et al., 2014). In this study, the Job Insecurity Scale, which has been translated into Indonesian, demonstrated a reliability of $\alpha = 0.702$. The 95% Confidence Interval (CI) ranges from 0.581 to 0.793. Overall, it can be concluded that the Job Insecurity Scale (JIS) has adequate reliability for use in this study.

Table 2. <Items Number From The Job Insecurity Scale (JIS)>

Scale	Item Number	Total Item
Job Insecurity	1,2,3,4	4

The 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), developed by Cohen et al. (1983), is a self-report instrument that evaluates individuals' perceptions of stress experienced during the past month (Cohen et al., 1983). In this study, the PSS-10 instrument was adopted from Hakim et al. (2024) without modification. The scale's aspects of work stress include perceived helplessness, consisting of six out of the 10 items from the PSS-10 considered negative (1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10), and perceived self-efficacy, consisting of four items as positive (4, 5, 7, 8). Respondents are asked to rate these items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (Never) to 4 (Very Often). The items used in this study are based on those adapted into Indonesian (Hakim et al., 2024), whose validation results reported an AVE of 0.58 and a CR of 0.93. In this study, the PSS-10 exhibited a reliability of $\alpha = 0.741$. The test results show that the point estimate indicates good reliability, as it exceeds the 0.70 threshold. The 95% Confidence Interval (CI), ranging from 0.629 to 0.825, also shows adequate internal consistency, although its lower bound is slightly near the recommended threshold. Overall, it can be concluded that the Perceived Stress Scale has good reliability for use in this study.

Table 3. <Items Number From the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)>

Factor	Item	Total Item
Perceived Helplessness	1,2,3,6,9,10	6
Perceived Self-efficacy	4,5,7,8	4

Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI), WAMI is a 10-item scale developed by Steger et al. (2012). Participants evaluate each item using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (absolutely untrue) to 5 (absolutely true). In this study, the WAMI instrument was adopted from Steger et al. (2012), without modification. According to research by Steger et al. (2012) the reliability coefficient for the Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI) showed excellent values. The reliability coefficient for the Positive Meaning (PM) subscale is $\alpha = 0.89$, for the Meaning-Making through Work (MM) subscale is $\alpha = 0.82$, and for the Greater Good Motivations (GG) subscale is $\alpha = 0.83$. Overall, the internal consistency for the total Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI) scale is very high, with a value of $\alpha = 0.93$. This indicates that WAMI is a reliable tool for evaluating the meaning of work. In this study, the Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI) exhibited a reliability of $\alpha = 0.911$. The test results show that the point estimate indicates excellent reliability, as it far exceeds the 0.70 threshold. The 95% Confidence Interval (CI), ranging from 0.881-0.935, also indicates very strong internal consistency. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI) has excellent reliability for use in this study.

Table 4. <Items Number From the Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI)>

Subscale	Item	Total Item
Positive meaning	1, 4, 5, 8	4
Meaning making through work	2,7,9	3
Greater good motivations	3,6,10	3

Data collection

The approach in this study is based on a survey method. There are four variables in this study: predictor variables (job insecurity and meaningful work), mediator variable (work stress), and dependent variable (psychological well-being). Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire distributed through Google Form, allowing participants to complete the survey online at their convenience. The instruments used include the Indonesian Well-being Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, Job Insecurity Scale, and Work and Meaning Inventory.

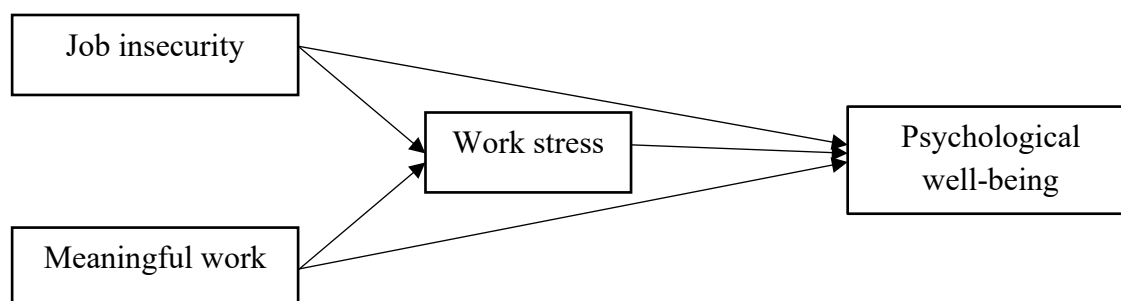


Figure 1. Independent Variables, Dependent Variable, and Mediator Variable

Based on Figure 1, the model identifies job insecurity and meaningful work as the independent variables (IV), while the dependent variable (DV) is psychological well-being, with work stress as the mediator variable. This mediator variable serves to explain how the relationship between the independent and dependent variables works, as well as to illustrate the mechanism or process underlying the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Job insecurity and meaningful work in this model are related to psychological well-being, with work stress acting as the mediator.

Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted using JASP version 0.16.4.0. First, descriptive analyses were performed to summarize the demographic characteristics of participants, including frequencies and percentages for categorical variables. Next, regression analysis was conducted to examine the direct relationships between the predictor variables (job insecurity and meaningful work) and the dependent variable (psychological well-being). Finally, the mediating role of work stress in the relationship between job insecurity and meaningful work with psychological well-being was tested using mediation analysis with path analysis methods, assisted by JASP.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

Based on the data obtained, the majority of respondents were in the age range of 26-35 years, with 67 people (57.30%), followed by those under 25 years with 31 people (26.50%), those aged 36-45 years with 17 people (14.50%), and those aged 46-55 years with 2 people (1.70%). In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were male, with 92 people (78.60%), while 25 people (21.40%) were female. Regarding the highest level of education, most respondents had a high school education (SLTA) with 97

people (82.90%), followed by junior high school (SLTP) with 16 people (13.70%), diploma with 3 people (2.60%), and bachelor's degree with 1 person (0.90%). Regarding marital status, 39 people (33.30%) were unmarried, while 78 people (66.70%) were married (Table 5).

Table 5. <Participants' Characteristics by Demographic Variables>

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
< 25 years	31	26.50%
26-35 years	67	57.30%
36-45 years	17	14.50%
46-55 years	2	1.70%
Gender		
Male	92	78.60%
Female	25	21.40%
Last Education Level		
High School (SLTA)	97	82.90%
Junior High School (SLTP)	16	13.70%
Diploma	3	2.60%
Bachelor's Degree	1	0.90%
Marital Status		
Unmarried	39	33.30%
Married	78	66.70%

The correlation results in Table 6. show that job insecurity is positively and weakly associated with work stress ($r = 0.211$) and negatively and weakly associated with psychological well-being ($r = -0.221$) and meaningful work ($r = -0.218$). Conversely, work stress is negatively associated with psychological well-being ($r = -0.260$; weak correlation) and moderately associated with meaningful work ($r = -0.397$, $p < .001$). Specifically, participants who reported lower levels of job insecurity tended to have lower work stress levels as well as better psychological well-being and meaningful work. Additionally, a moderate and significant positive relationship was found between psychological well-being and meaningful work ($r = 0.540$, $p < .001$).

Table 6. <Descriptive Statistics and Correlations>

Variable	M	SD	Job Insecurity	Work Stress	Psychological Well-Being	Meaningful Work
Job Insecurity	2.083	1.15	—	—	—	—
Work Stress	1.611	1.954	0.211	—	—	—
Psychological Well-Being	4.052	1.049	-0.221	-0.260	—	—
Meaningful Work	3.77	0.99	-0.218	-0.397*	0.540*	—

* $p < .001$.

Table 7. <Direct, Indirect, Total Effect, Path Coefficient>

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Direct Effect						
Job Insecurity → Psychological Well-being	-0.078	0.027	-2.923	0.003	-0.131	-0.026
Meaningful Work → Psychological Well-being	0.059	0.013	4.438	< .001	0.033	0.085
Indirect Effect						
Job Insecurity → Work Stress → Psychological Well-being	-0.002	0.003	-0.506	0.613	-0.008	0.005
Meaningful Work → Work Stress → Psychological Well-being	0.003	0.005	0.546	0.585	-0.007	0.012
Total Effect						
Job Insecurity → Psychological Well-being	-0.080	0.027	-3.006	0.003	-0.132	-0.028
Meaningful Work → Psychological Well-being	0.062	0.012	4.989	< .001	0.038	0.086
Path coefficients						
Work Stress → Psychological Well-being	-0.048	0.087	-0.550	0.582	-0.218	0.122
Job Insecurity → Work Stress	0.036	0.028	1.289	0.197	-0.019	0.092
Meaningful Work → Work Stress	-0.057	0.013	-4.305	< .001	-0.083	-0.031

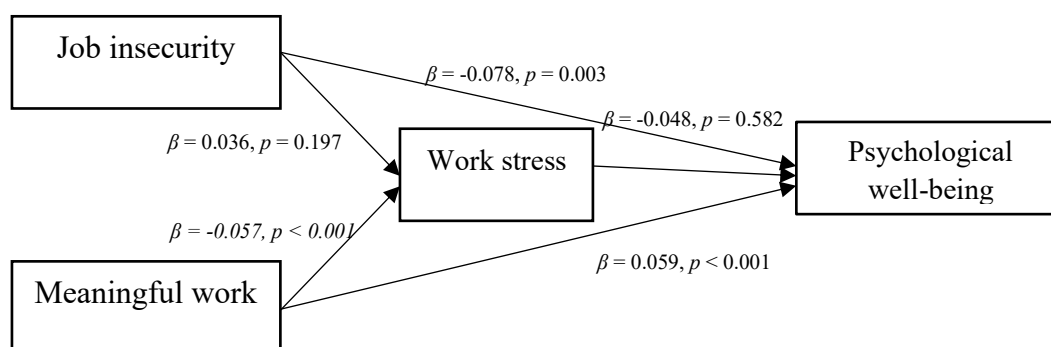


Figure 2. Results of the regression test on job insecurity, meaningful work, psychological well-being, and work stress

As shown in Table 7 and Figure 2, the research findings highlight relationships between job insecurity, meaningful work, work stress, and psychological well-being. Directly, job insecurity has a significant negative effect on psychological well-being ($\beta = -0.078$, $p = 0.003$), with a 95% confidence interval between -0.131 and -0.026, which aligns with Hypothesis 1 (H1). This suggests that individuals who feel insecure in their jobs tend to experience a decline in psychological well-being. In contrast, meaningful work has a significant positive effect on psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.059$, $p < 0.001$), with a 95% confidence interval between 0.033 and 0.085, which aligns with Hypothesis 2 (H2). This indicates that the greater the sense of meaning in work, the better the individual's psychological well-being.

Based on the total effect, job insecurity has a significant negative influence on psychological well-being ($\beta = -0.080$, $p = 0.003$), while meaningful work shows a significant positive influence ($\beta = 0.062$, $p < 0.001$). In other words, the relationship between these variables is more explained by the direct path than through the mediator of work stress.

Next, in the path coefficients, work stress does not significantly influence on psychological well-being ($\beta = -0.048$, $p = 0.582$), and this result rejects hypothesis 5 (H5). Job insecurity also does not significantly associated with work stress ($\beta = 0.036$, $p = 0.197$), which rejects hypothesis 3 (H3). However, meaningful work shows a significant negative relationship with work stress ($\beta = -0.057$, $p < 0.001$), with the 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.083 and -0.031 . This result is consistent with hypothesis 4 (H4). It suggests that the perception of meaning in work can reduce work stress, although this effect does not significantly influence psychological well-being through the indirect path.

In the indirect effect through work stress, neither job insecurity ($\beta = -0.002$, $p = 0.613$) nor meaningful work ($\beta = 0.003$, $p = 0.585$) shows a significant impact on psychological well-being, which rejects hypotheses 6 and 7 (H6 & H7). This indicates that work stress does not play a significant mediating role in the relationship between these independent variables and psychological well-being. The total effect shows a pattern consistent with the direct effects.

The mediation analysis results indicate that the model explains 26.4% of the variance in psychological well-being ($R^2 = 0.264$) and 16.6% of the variance in work stress ($R^2 = 0.166$). This suggests that the predictors in this study, job insecurity and meaningful work, account for a moderate proportion of variance in psychological well-being and a smaller proportion of variance in work stress. The remaining variance is likely influenced by other factors not included in the model.

Discussion

The study examines the effects of job insecurity, meaningful work, work stress, and psychological well-being. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of meaningful work as a positive factor that directly enhances psychological well-being, as well as the negative impact of job insecurity on psychological well-being.

The findings indicate that job insecurity significantly and negatively affects psychological well-being, suggesting that individuals who perceive greater insecurity in their employment are more likely to experience reduced levels of psychological well-being. Job insecurity is one of the work stressors that can affect an individual's well-being (Mauno et al., 2014). The impact of job insecurity lies in the fact that its impact is not only on individuals but can also affect other workgroups (Mauno et al., 2014). The findings of this study are in line with previous research, showing that job insecurity influences individuals' psychological well-being (Jalil et al., 2023; Låstad et al., 2021; Maulidina & Nurtjahjanti, 2016; Silla et al., 2009; Ugwu et al., 2021; Witte et al., 2016; Witte et al., 2015).

Meaningful work in this study proves to be a predictor of psychological well-being. In this context, the better the meaningful work that employees perceive in relation to their jobs, the better their psychological well-being, including aspects such as spirituality, fulfillment of basic needs, self-acceptance, and social relationships, which are components of psychological well-being. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research that states meaningful work has an impact on psychological well-being (Çetin et al., 2017; Golparvar & Abedini, 2014; Mansouri et al., 2022; Salleh et al., 2020).

The findings of this study indicate that job insecurity does not have a significant relationship with work stress. In the context of this study, no evidence was found to suggest that job insecurity acts as a predictor of work stress. This implies that feelings of insecurity in the workplace do not lead to an increase or decrease in the work stress experienced by individuals. These findings differ from previous research, which suggests that job insecurity can serve as a predictor of work stress (Lestari et al., 2020; Medysar et al., 2019).

Meaningful work shows a significant and negative relationship with work stress. This implies that the better employees find meaningful and positive work that enhances their self-motivation, the lower their work stress will be. The results of this study are consistent with previous research that states meaningful work has an impact on work stress (Landells & Albrecht, 2019).

Work stress does not have a significant effect on psychological well-being. Based on the research findings, there is not enough statistical evidence to suggest that work stress impacts psychological well-being. This implies that the level of stress experienced by employees does not directly cause an increase or decrease in their psychological well-being. These results differ from previous studies that indicate a relationship between these two variables (Septiana & Suroso, 2024; Sopacuaperu & Kristianingsih, 2024). The differences in the results of this study compared to previous research may be due to several factors. First, there may be other variables that mediate the relationship between work stress and psychological well-being. Second, there may be other variables that act as a buffer effect between these two variables. These variables could potentially serve as resources that weaken or even eliminate the impact of work stress on psychological well-being.

Third, based on the categorization of meaningful work among the study respondents, 52.9% of respondents reported high meaningful work, 46.15% were in the moderate category, and only 0.885% had low meaningful work. This suggests that the majority of respondents feel their work has significant meaning, contributes positively, or provides purpose in their lives. This naturally leads to a reduction in work stress, which ultimately enhances employees' psychological well-being.

In the indirect effect through work stress, neither job insecurity nor meaningful work showed a significant impact on psychological well-being. This indicates that work stress does not play a significant mediating role in the relationship between these independent variables and psychological well-being. Based on the results, the lack of a mediating effect of work stress can be attributed to the presence of meaningful work resources and low feelings of job insecurity in employees, strengthening the direct relationship between job insecurity, meaningful work, and psychological well-being.

The findings of this study emphasize that meaningful work is an important psychological resource, while work stress is not the primary mediator between job insecurity and psychological well-being, which opens opportunities to explore other mechanisms. Practically, organizations can enhance employees' psychological well-being by fostering meaningful work and reducing job insecurity through recognition of contributions, development opportunities, work with tangible impact, and transparent policies regarding job status and career prospects. Interventions should not only focus on managing work stress but also strengthen intrinsic factors that provide meaning in work. Beyond individual effects, increasing meaningful work can create a more positive collective work environment, while high job insecurity highlights the importance of labor protection policies and government support.

This study has several limitations. One of the limitations is that the participants in this study are from a specific region, which means the results may not be generalized to other areas with different social, cultural, or economic contexts. Local factors such as work culture, social norms, and economic conditions in other regions may influence the relationship between job insecurity, meaningful work, work stress, and psychological well-being. Additionally, this study did not explicitly consider cultural factors in the research model. Cultural factors, such as collectivist or individualist cultures, are likely to affect the dynamics of the relationships between variables.

For researchers who wish to study similar themes, these findings could serve as a basis for exploring other factors that may act as mediators or moderators in the relationship between job insecurity, meaningful work, and psychological well-being. Factors such as social support, resilience, growth mindset, job crafting, or organizational culture could be the focus of future research. Meaningful work could also be used as a mediator or moderator to examine the relationship between job insecurity, work stress, and psychological well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the influence of job insecurity and meaningful work on psychological well-being, with work stress as a mediator. The results show that job insecurity has a significant negative effect on psychological well-being, while meaningful work has a significant positive effect on psychological well-being. However, work stress does not play a mediating role in the relationship between both job insecurity and meaningful work with psychological well-being. Additionally, the effect of work stress on psychological well-being is not significant, nor is the relationship between job insecurity and work stress. On the other hand, meaningful work has a significant negative effect on work stress, meaning that the higher the sense of meaning in work, the lower the level of work stress experienced by individuals.

These findings suggest the need for career counseling interventions aimed at reducing the negative impact of job insecurity and enhancing employees' experience of meaningful work. Counseling strategies may also include efforts to enhance various aspects of meaningful work, such as helping individuals develop a more positive perspective on their jobs, recognize how their work contributes to a sense of personal meaning, and understand how their roles have a broader and positive impact on others, thereby fostering greater psychological well-being among employees.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

ARH is responsible for developing the conceptual framework, writing the manuscript, and interpreting the research results. LM is responsible for collecting and checking the research data. DA is responsible for analyzing the data and reviewing the manuscript. TS is responsible for distributing the questionnaire, entering the data, and assisting in data analysis. All authors have read and approved the the manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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