

## Optimizing Sales Performance with Psychological Capital: Mediated Job Embeddedness of Salespeople

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of Psychological Capital on Sales Performance with Job Embeddedness as a mediating variable on SALESPEOPLE. The method used is quantitative with a survey approach. The research sample consisted of 30 Salespeople working at PT. PT Mujur Sumber Alam Semesta (Sosro), North Sumatra. The data analysis technique used is Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with the help of Smartpls software. The study results indicate that Psychological Capital significantly affects Sales Performance through Job Embeddedness, although there is no significant direct effect between Psychological Capital and Sales Performance. This finding provides important implications for companies in designing employee development strategies focusing on Psychological Capital and Job Embeddedness to improve sales performance. This study also offers theoretical contributions to understanding the relationship between psychological capital and organisational performance by highlighting the important role of job embeddedness.

**Keywords:** Psychological Capital, Sales Performance, Job Embeddedness, Structural Equation Modeling.

## INTRODUCTION

Consumer goods companies face high pressure in maintaining the performance of their sales team, especially in the face of market competition, changes in consumer preferences, and distribution dynamics. In this context, salespeople's performance becomes a strategic element determining marketing effectiveness and the company's sustainability (Farida & Setiawan, 2022); (Prayogi et al., 2022). To encourage superior performance, organizations are not only required to provide economic incentives but also pay attention to the psychological aspects inherent in salespeople, one of which is Psychological Capital (PsyCap) (Costa et al., 2023); (Ewe & Ho, 2024).

*Psychological Capital has four dimensions: hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. It has been proven to contribute to improving employee performance in various sectors* (Karimi et al., 2023). Individuals with high PsyCap tend to be more motivated, able to cope with stress, and oriented towards achieving goals (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2021). In a work world that demands speed and toughness, salespeople with substantial psychological capital are believed to be able to show better performance (Gupta et al., 2022).

However, the direct relationship between PsyCap and performance does not fully explain the complexity of the field. One psychological mechanism that is believed to act as a mediator is Job Embeddedness (Qian et al., 2022); (Ali et al., 2022), namely the extent to which employees are emotionally, socially, and structurally attached to their jobs (Harunavamwe et al., 2020), the higher the embeddedness, the more likely employees are to stay and contribute optimally (Steindórsdóttir et al., 2021).

In the context of consumer goods company salespeople, job embeddedness can be an essential key that bridges internal psychological strength and the realisation of performance in the field. However, research on the mediating role of job embeddedness in the relationship between PsyCap and salesman performance is still limited, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia, which have unique work culture contexts and market pressures. Several studies have shown that PsyCap positively correlates with various work performance indicators (Abukhalifa et al., 2024); (Yao et al., 2022).

In the context of sales, Pomak et al., (2021) emphasised that salespeople with high PsyCap are more resistant to rejection, more proactive, and tend to show high work enthusiasm. Research by Khanh Giao & Vuong, (2020) also found that PsyCap increases engagement and performance in customer service. However, the combination of PsyCap and job embeddedness as predictors of salesperson performance is still rarely studied, so a combination approach that integrates psychological strengths and work bonds can provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee motivation and behaviour, especially in high-pressure jobs such as sales.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a positive psychological construct of four main dimensions: self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (X. Yu et al., 2019). These four elements are considered psychological resources that can be developed to improve employee work performance. Self-efficacy relates to an individual's belief in completing challenging tasks, hope indicates confidence in achieving goals with various alternative paths, resilience refers to the ability to recover from difficulties, and optimism reflects positive expectations of the results to be achieved. Several studies have shown that PsyCap has a positive correlation with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Nguyen & Ngo, 2020); (H. Chen et al., 2024); (Tüzün et al., 2018). In the context of salespeople, PsyCap is important because this job is stressful and requires high mental endurance and stable motivation to meet sales targets (Esterina et al., 2023); (Alessandri et al., 2018). However, there are still limited studies that specifically

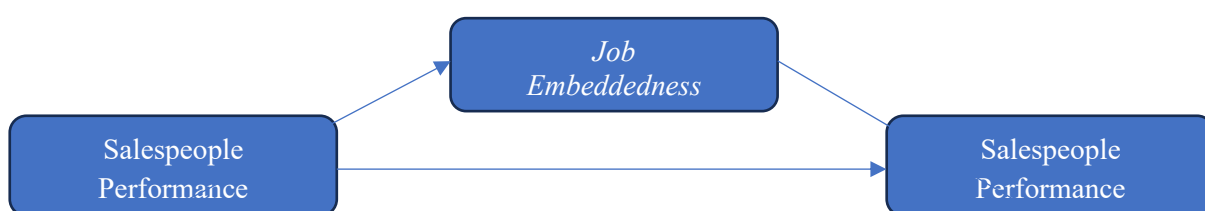
explore the role of PsyCap in improving salesperson performance in the consumer goods industry, which is characterised by high market competition and workload.

### Job Embeddedness

*Job embeddedness is a concept developed to explain why individuals stay in their jobs* (Shah et al., 2020). It consists of three main components, namely fit (the suitability of the individual to the job and environment), links (social relationships in the workplace), and sacrifice (the perceived loss of leaving the job) (Mehmood et al., 2021). Individuals who have high job embeddedness tend to be more loyal, oriented towards positive contributions and are not easily tempted by offers from outside the organization (Ampofo, 2020). Previous research has shown that job embeddedness is important in reducing turnover intention (Yang et al., 2019), moreover, improving work performance (J. Yu et al., 2020). In the context of PsyCap, individuals with high psychological capital build strong work engagement because they have a fighting spirit and a positive outlook on their work and organization (Wu & Lee, 2020). Oleh Therefore, job embeddedness can be a mediating variable that bridges the influence of PsyCap on job outcomes, such as performance (Safavi & Karatepe, 2019).

### Kinerja Salesman

Salesman performance is the work results shown by salespeople in carrying out their duties to achieve company targets (Nasution et al., 2023); (Jufrizen et al., 2024). In modern literature, performance is classified into three dimensions: task performance, contextual performance and adaptive performance Salespeople have unique challenges, such as target pressure, the need for intense social interaction, and rapid adaptation to changes in marketing strategies. Research shows that psychological factors such as motivation, psychological capital, and work engagement greatly affect salesperson performance (Wang et al., 2021). PsyCap can be a major driver in improving this performance. However, its effects can be strengthened when salespeople also have a high level of engagement with their jobs through job embeddedness (Ali et al., 2022).



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical review and the results of the initial analysis of the constructs studied, this study proposes several relationships between variables, which are stated in the form of hypotheses, namely:

- H1: Job Embeddedness has a positive effect on Sales Performance
- H2: Psychological Capital has a positive effect on Sales Performance
- H3: Job Embeddedness has a positive effect on Psychological Capital
- H4: Psychological Capital mediates the effect of Job Embeddedness on Sales Performance

### METHOD

This study uses a quantitative associative approach to test the relationship between variables, whereas an association is used to analyse how one variable relates to another

variable. The population in this study were all salespeople of PT Mujur Sumber Alam Semesta (Sosro) Amplas, totalling 37 people, consisting of 19 Sales TO Area and 18 Sales TO Wholesale. In this study, several variables are measured by specific indicators. Salesman performance (Y) is defined as the ability of a salesman to sell products with high margins to achieve predetermined targets, as measured by indicators of increased sales volume, number of new customers, increased sales incentives, target achievement within a set time limit, and retaining existing customers (Aqmala & Ardyan, 2019).

Psychological capital (X2) refers to an individual's capacity to control their work environment to achieve success and meet high job demands, as measured by indicators of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy (Jung & Yoon, 2015) and job embeddedness (Z) refers to an individual's commitment to the organization or their work, which is formed through relationships and networks in the workplace, with indicators of job fit, job link, and job sacrifices (Lim et al., 2023).

This study analysed data using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach. SEM-PLS consists of two main models: a measurement model (outer model) and a structural model (inner model). The measurement model was analysed through convergent validity, discriminant, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha. In contrast, the structural model tested R-square, F-square, and hypothesis testing through direct, indirect, and total effects. Convergent validity measures the relationship between indicators and constructs, while discriminant tests whether indicators have low correlations between constructs. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha measure internal consistency. The structural model evaluates the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables, with hypothesis testing using path coefficient values and p-value significance to determine direct and indirect effects.

## RESULTS

To evaluate the validity and reliability of the measurement model in this study, an analysis was conducted on several leading indicators such as Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (rho\_a and rho\_c), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The following are the results of the reliability and construct validity analysis for the three main variables involved in the study: Job Embeddedness, Psychological Capital, and Sales Performance. Table 1 below presents the reliability and validity values of each variable:

**Table 1.** Reliability and Construct Validity Values.

	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>Composite reliability (rho_a)</b>	<b>Composite reliability (rho_c)</b>	<b>Average variance extracted (AVE)</b>
Job Embeddedness	0.712	0.725	0.873	0.775
Psychological Capital	0.953	0.953	0.977	0.955
Sales Performance	0.712	0.714	0.874	0.776

Based on the results of construct reliability testing through Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (rho\_a and rho\_c), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indicators, the following results were obtained:

1. Job Embeddedness shows a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.712, indicating good internal reliability because it is above the minimum threshold of 0.70. The Composite Reliability value (rho\_a = 0.725; rho\_c = 0.873) indicates that this construct has good internal consistency. Meanwhile, the AVE value of 0.775 illustrates that the variance explained

by the indicator to the construct is greater than the error variance, so it can be concluded that the convergent validity of Job Embeddedness is met.

2. Psychological Capital has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.953, indicating high reliability. This is reinforced by the Composite Reliability value ( $\rho_a = 0.953$ ;  $\rho_c = 0.977$ ), which is also very high. In addition, the AVE value of 0.955 indicates that this construct has excellent convergent validity, whereas the Psychological Capital construct can explain most of the indicator variance.
3. Sales Performance shows a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.712, which reflects acceptable reliability. The Composite Reliability value ( $\rho_a = 0.714$ ;  $\rho_c = 0.874$ ) indicates that this construct has good internal consistency. With an AVE of 0.776, it can be concluded that the Sales Performance construct has also met convergent validity because the AVE value is greater than 0.50.

Overall, the three constructs in this model have met the reliability and convergent validity criteria, which means that the instruments used in this study can measure the constructs consistently and accurately.

An analysis of the proposed hypothesis was conducted to test the relationship between variables in this research model by looking at the path coefficient value and the significance of each relationship between variables. The following is a table that describes the results of the hypothesis test in this study, which shows the path coefficient value, t-statistic value, and p-value for each relationship between variables tested. The following table presents the results of the hypothesis test and its interpretation:

**Table 2. Results of the Hypothesis Test of the Research Mod**

	<b>Original sample (O)</b>	<b>Sample mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (STDEV)</b>	<b>T statistics ( O/STDEV )</b>	<b>P values</b>
Job Embeddedness → Sales Performance	0.896	0.896	0.061	14.694	0.000
Psychological Capital → Job Embeddedness	0.104	0.120	0.145	0.716	0.474
Psychological Capital → Sales Performance	-0.026	-0.027	0.052	0.492	0.623
Psychological Capital → Job Embeddedness → Sales Performance	0.093	0.108	0.130	0.713	0.476

Based on the results of path analysis with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, the following information was obtained regarding the relationship between variables:

1. The effect of Job Embeddedness on Sales Performance shows a coefficient value of 0.896 with a T-statistic of 14.694 and a p-value of 0.000. These results indicate that the effect of Job Embeddedness on Sales Performance is statistically significant (because the p-value < 0.05 and T-statistic > 1.96). Thus, the higher the employee engagement (Job Embeddedness), the higher the sales performance (Sales Performance).
2. The effect of Psychological Capital on Job Embeddedness shows a coefficient value of 0.104, with a T-statistic of 0.716 and a p-value of 0.474. This effect is not statistically significant because the p-value > 0.05 and the T-statistic < 1.96. This means that psychological capital does not directly and significantly affect employee engagement (Job Embeddedness) in this study.
3. The effect of Psychological Capital on Sales Performance also shows a negative coefficient of -0.026, with a T-statistic of 0.492 and a p-value of 0.623. These results indicate that the effect of psychological capital on sales performance is not significant,



even though the direction of the relationship is negative and very weak. This indicates that psychological capital does not directly increase sales performance in this model.

4. Psychological Capital is not strong enough to influence job embeddedness, so the overall mediation effect is also insignificant. This shows that in the context of this study, the effect of Psychological Capital on sales performance does not occur directly or indirectly through job embeddedness.

In this model, only Job Embeddedness is proven to influence Sales Performance significantly. Meanwhile, psychological capital does not have a significant direct influence on either job embeddedness or sales performance. This finding indicates that Job Embeddedness is a key factor driving increased sales performance. At the same time, the influence of Psychological Capital tends to be indirect or mediated by other variables in the model.

## DISCUSSION

### **Job Embeddedness has a significant effect on Sales Performance.**

The study results show that Job Embeddedness significantly and positively affects Sales Performance ( $\beta = 0.896$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This means that the higher the attachment of a salesperson to his/her job, the higher his/her performance. This finding supports the Job Embeddedness theory, which states that attachment to work influences the decision to stay and the productive behaviour of employees. Furthermore, employees who feel attached to their organization will be highly committed to achieving organizational targets, including sales (J. Yu et al., 2020); (Lee & Huang, 2019). In addition, Job Embeddedness also contributes to increased intrinsic motivation and focus on achieving optimal performance, especially in a dynamic work environment such as sales (W. Chen, 2022).

### **Psychological Capital berpengaruh signifikan terhadap Sales Performance**

Psychological Capital has a significant effect on Sales Performance.

The study results showed that Psychological Capital did not significantly affect Sales Performance ( $\beta = -0.026$ ;  $p = 0.623$ ). This finding differs from several previous studies, such as those by Slåtten et al. (2019). Psychological capital directly impacts performance because it helps employees deal with work pressure, maintain motivation, and set and achieve goals.

However, in the context of highly competitive sales jobs, success is determined by psychological Capital and depends on organizational support, incentive structures, and the training provided. This is reinforced by research Kalyar et al., (2019) Psychological Capital will only be effective if the organisation designs jobs allowing individuals to channel their psychological strengths. Likewise, Karimi et al., (2023) emphasise that psychological Capital must be transformed into productive work behaviour through conducive working conditions.

### **Psychological Capital has a significant effect on Job Embeddedness.**

The analysis results show that Psychological Capital's effect on Job Embeddedness is insignificant ( $\beta = 0.104$ ;  $p = 0.474$ ). This finding does not align with research Ali et al., (2022) This shows that individuals with high hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism tend to have greater work engagement. However, in specific organizational contexts, the effect of psychological Capital on Job Embeddedness can be disrupted by external conditions such as organizational culture, leadership, and less supportive reward systems (Yoon et al., 2022). In addition, Pillay et al., (2020) added that psychological Capital requires a supportive environmental catalyst to impact organizational behaviour significantly, such as job embeddedness (Tsai et al., 2020).

### **Mediation: Psychological Capital has an indirect effect on Sales Performance through Job Embeddedness**

The analysis results show that the indirect effect of Psychological Capital on Sales Performance through Job Embeddedness is not significant ( $\beta = 0.093$ ;  $p = 0.476$ ). This means that although theoretically, Psychological Capital is expected to increase Job Embeddedness, which ultimately increases Sales Performance, the mediation pathway was not statistically proven in this study. This finding contradicts several previous studies, which state that job embeddedness can be an important mechanism in transmitting the influence of psychological capital on performance (Ali et al., 2022). However, several researchers have stated that the effectiveness of this mediation pathway is highly dependent on the organizational context, managerial support, and work environment that allows employees' positive psychology to develop (Dechawatanapaisal, 2021). In the context of this study, the weak role of the external environment and sales job characteristics may hinder the mediation role of job embeddedness.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study shows that psychological capital has a significant direct effect on sales performance, but job embeddedness has not been proven to be a significant mediator in the relationship. This finding highlights the importance of managing Psychological Capital to improve sales performance, although other factors, such as organizational culture, may play a greater role in the mediation. The practical implication is that companies must focus on developing Psychological Capital to improve sales team performance, although the mediation path through Job Embeddedness is unreliable.

This study provides new insights by examining the relationship between Psychological Capital and Sales Performance through Job Embeddedness, which has not been widely discussed in the literature. However, the limitations of this study include the cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to draw causal conclusions, and the subjective nature of the measurement, which may affect the results.

Future research can use a longitudinal design to study the causal relationship in more depth and explore other variables, such as social support or leadership, that may moderate this relationship. Further research in other sectors is also recommended to increase the generalizability of these findings.

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