# Religious Coping, Job Insecurity and Job Stress among Javanese Academic Staff: A Moderated Regression Analysis

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#### Abstract

Work is a demand for an adult, because through working, person can actualize their skill and achieve their aspiration. Beside that through working, person can meets their basic needs of life. Yet, working also has a hidden threat that can be suddenly attack and eradicate the well being of person. Those hidden threat is called as a strain and stress.

The present study purposes to examine relationship between job insecurity, and the role of religious coping as moderator variables with job stress among Javanese academic staff. Contextual factor should be considered to achieve more in depth comprehension about dynamic relationship of job stress, especially this study take Javanese culture account for understanding of contextualizing theory of job stress. Moderated multiple regression was conducted to examine this issue.

The result of study confirmed that there is a significant relationship between job insecurity with job stress, and religious coping moderate the relationship between job insecurity with job stress. The mechanism of relationship among exogenous and endogenous variables was discussed in a paper below.

Keywords: Religious coping, Job insecurity, Job stress

#### 1. Introduction

Current time, employees are expected to be able to learn the different cultures, languages, rules and regulations of international trade, resulting in increased workloads, the pressure to enhance job skills and long working hours (Cooper, 2006). Such changes in the nature of job, working environment and organizational behavior would undoubtedly increase the occupational stress of the workers, which in turn affect worker's physical and mental health (Dollard, 2003; Devereux et al., 2004). The effect of job stress on mental and physical health is not only influences individual, but also has a real cost to the organization. This cost is rarely and has not seriously been considered either in the human capital or financial term by the organization (Wilhelm, et al 2004).

Many studies concluded that job stress is major factor causes some forms of disability (Sulsky & Smith, 2005). These include the personal reactions such as anxiety and depression (Stoner & Perrewe, 2006; Gellis, & Kim,

2004), apathy, alienation, absenteeism (Kim, Sorhaindo, & Garman, 2006), aggression, alcoholism and substance abused (Jones, Kinman, & Payne, 2006), unmotivated and low productivity (Jex et al, 2006).

Health problem that caused by job stress can affects employee through increases blood pressure (Mills, Davidson & Farag, 2004; O'Connor et al, 2001), cardiovascular and coronary heart disease (Rosch, 2006; Lee et al, 2002), muscular tension (Devereux et al., 2004), internal fatigue (Friesen et al., 2008), atherosclerosis (Hintsanen, 2006), decrease natural cell activity (Morikawa et al., 2005), work-related musculoskeletal disorders (Carayon, Smith, & Haims, 1999), arrhythmogenesis (Qureshi et al, 2001), short menstrual cycle with women (Fenster et al., 1999), dryness of throat, and overproduction acid gastric. If job stress was not handled and mitigated effectively, it will leads to severe job stress those are burnout (Park, 2007; Heiman & Kariv, 2005; Rice, 2005; Spangenberg, & Theron, 2005; Burke, 2002; Wilhelm et al., 2004).

## 1. Literture Review

Robbins (2003) stated and suggested a model of stress that consisted of three potential stressor that are, environmental factors, organizational factors and individual factors which the strengh of its influences not directly cause higher level of job stress but moderating by individual differences as individual factors such as perception, personality and social support.

Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske (2006) suggested another model which quite different from Robbins's model (2003) above but not totally different. They stated a model of organizational stress consisted of four level that are individual level, group level, organizational level, and non-work level which the strenght of its influences not directly bring higher level to job stress, but moderating by individual differences such personality, heredity, age, sex, and social support. So the similarity of two model mentions above, its explained the influences and role of moderating variable on stressors-strains relationships specially in context of job stress.

In this study, the conceptual model of job stress that was explained by Robbins (2003) and Gibson et al (2006) above will be adapted and tested in Javanese culture among higher learning academic staff in Yogyakarta Indonesia. Although many research of job stress used and inspired from Robbins (2003) and Gibson et al (2006) model of job stress above, but past study did not examine the nature of job stress in Javanese of context.

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). NIOSH (1999) defined job stress as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when job requirements do not match the worker's capabilities, resources, and needs. Definitions from NIOSH suggest that job stress happen when individual capabilities cannot manage and handle job demands. In other word, person and job requirement do not fit and match, so tension and frustration exist and affect individual emotionally and physically.

In the other side, Cohen, Kessler, & Gordon (1998) defined stress is a process that occurs when environmental demands exceed the adaptive capacity of persons, this process results in biological and/or psychological changes that may have consequences for health, and individual appraisals are important in determining responses to stress.

In its most widely accepted use, stress has been defined as a process of interaction between the person and the environment, term of this definition is transactional model (Lazarus, 1999). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined stress as any event in which environmental demands and/or internal demands (physiological or psychological) tax or exceed the adaptive resources of the individual, his or her tissue system, or the social system of which one is a part. In this definition, stress is an interactional process and stress models that emphasize the process of interaction are called interactional stress models. One of the most accepted interactional models of stress is the "cognitive theory of stress and coping" which was proposed by Folkman and Lazarus (1984). The theory is composed of two crucial components in the stress process: cognitive appraisal and coping. In this research, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Gibson et al (2006) definition was adapted and becoming research perspective.

Coping is another crucial component of the cognitive theory of stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Together with appraisal, coping is seen as a mediator between the stress and its adaptational outcomes (Folkman, 1984). Folkman and Lazarus (1980) stated that "Coping refers to cognitive and behavioral efforts to master reduce or tolerate the internal and/or external demands that are created by stressful transaction" (cited in Folkman, 1984, p. 843). In the process of stress, coping has three distinct features. First, it is process oriented, that is; it focuses on what a person actually thinks and does in a specific encounter. Second, it is contextual, meaning that it is influenced by a person's appraisal of the actual demands in the situation. Personal and situational variables together determine the coping efforts and options. Third, a priory assumption is not made about what constitutes good or bad coping (Folkman, 1984). Differences in the conceptualization of coping have led to a number of ways of classifying coping strategies. Subsequently, Higgins and Endler (1995) grouped coping strategies into

three main classes: task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidance-oriented.

Nonetheless, there is broad agreement concerning the types of coping strategy that exist. There are five general types: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, social support, religious coping, and making meaning. Note that coping strategy is not mutually exclusive, and even strategies which may seem orthogonal, such as suppressing and expressing emotions, may be used sequentially in the same situation. Within each general type of coping strategy, there may be several subtypes.

In present study, religious coping will be examined as moderator variable that can increases or decreases the impact of job insecurity on job stress. Religious coping is define as the extent to which persons use their religious beliefs and practices to facilitate problem solving to prevent or alleviate the negative emotional effects of stressful circumstances and to help them to adapt to difficult life events (Koenig et al., 1998; Pargament, 1997). More specifically, positive religious coping refers to an expression of a sense of spirituality, a secure relationship with God, a belief that there is meaning to be found in life, and a sense of spiritual connectedness with others (Pargament, 1997).

According to Seeman, Dubin, & Seeman (2003) prayer and meditation practices have a significant positive relationship with improving health functioning, including cardiovascular functioning. VonDras, Schmitt, and Marx (2007) study result suggest that religious and existential well-being to be inversely associated with indices of alcohol use and the likelihood of attending a social event where alcohol is present. Religious and existential aspects of spiritual well-being have a role as moderators of behavior as well as causal attributions and beliefs that represent a cognitive mechanism of alcohol prevention in college women.

Other study by Greenfield, Vaillant, and Marks (2007) indicate that more frequent the daily spiritual experiences of person are independently and consistently associated with better psychological well-being. The more frequent formal religious participation, the more higher purpose in life, and positive relations with others.

Several factors that confirmed have relationship and impact on job stress is job insecurity. Job insecurity refers to employees' perceptions and concerns about potential involuntary job loss (De Witte 1999; Heaney et al. 1994). Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt (1984) define job insecurity as a perceived powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation. They further maintained that job insecurity based on the individual's perceptions and interpretations of the immediate work environment. This implies that subjectively experienced threats derived from objective threats by means of the individual's perceptual and cognitive processes (Borg & Elizur, 1992; Tivendell & Bourbonnais, 2000).

Researchers studying the psychological consequences of job insecurity have focused on the quality of work, the workers' health, wages, or the patterns of leaving home (Probst & Brubaker 2001). Another research has showed that job insecurity related to job attitudes such as job dissatisfaction (Probst & Brubaker, 2001), organizational attitudes such as low organizational commitment and trust, and decrease psychological and physical well-being outcomes (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003; Kivimaki, Vahtera, Pentti, & Ferrie, 2000). A few studies have identified additional work-related behaviors such as increased job search behavior (Adkins, Werbel, & Farh, 2001; Reisel & Banai, 2002) or safety (Probst & Brubaker, 2001). Other study by Silla et al (2008) suggests that job insecurity related to poor well-being.

Meanwhile, Ember and Ember (2000) advocated that a theory should be tested on cross-cultural context, because theory needs to be tested universally in order to achieve generalizability and applicability of one's theory. Ember and Ember (2000) argued that many researchers generalize about human behavior in parochial manner. It means that many scientists took their conclusion based on data which are drawn from one culture, then generalized it to another culture which has a different condition from first culture where data was taken. Ember and Ember (2000) explained that it is possible to sample the universe of human societies in an unbiased way so that test result can be generalized to all of human experience. In order to discover explanations that are true worldwide, and to derive practical applications that work worldwide, theories need to be tested as cross-culturally as possible.

Wan Rafaei Abdul Rahman (2004), Matsumoto and Juang (2008) stated that the major reason why a theory should be examined on cross-cultural (non-western culture), because most of theories and instrument are developed on western culture such as the United State, and the United Kingdom. In the other side, non-western culture like many East Asia countries have different values, beliefs, and different attitudes than the western culture. These condition rise a question about the universality of western theories if it will be applied in non western culture. So further study needs to examine the applicability of western theory in different context.

Present study wants to explore the relationship mechanism related to job stress at Javanese culture. Javanese

people emphasize values of calmness, harmoniousness, and balance as an important features of both Javanese mysticism and life (Walton, 2008). According to Geertz (1975), on Javanese people *rasa* concept or philosophy became an important way of life and a foundation to socialize on Javanese society. *Rasa* is the "connecting link" between the three major components of religious life: mystical practice, art, and etiquette. Another supreme values which have been guided until now are that life is *bener* (correct), *pener* (appropriate) and *slamet* (safe) if somebody manages and realizes to make himself or herself a true Javanese, which means becoming someone who is *berbudi bawa leksana lan ngudi sejatining becik* – wise and continually striving to do good things (Sutarto, 2006). Based on several arguments above, it can be concluded that on Javanese people, religious life is very important, and become a way of life in accepting and experiencing the course of life.

In Indonesia, the phenomena of job stress was happened too. Several past studies concluded that every years the job stress cases in Indonesia increase rapidly and interfere many aspects of employee such as social, emotional, psychological and health-related problems. Result study from Sugijanto (1999) showed that from 326 teachers respondent, he found 168 (51.5%) teachers who really feel stress. It means almost 60% teachers respondent sample experienced the job stress in his research. Another study from Arismunandar (2008) concluded that 30.27% from 80.000 teachers experienced severe type of job stress. It means that the total of teachers that experienced the job stress was 24.000 person. Beside that, in his study showed that job stress influencing and reducing the teacher performance, the higher the job stress level experienced by teachers, the lower the teachers's performance and their productivity.

Study by Badra, & Prawitasari (2005) indicated average score of job stress among academic staffs of Nursing College in Sorong Papua is medium (56.72) and product moment correlation test showed that the relationship between performance and work stress was -0.695. the negative correlation score pointed that job stress has impact to performance, when job stress is high, than performance become low.

Yulianti's study (2002) showed that variables of organizational structure dimension, job design, workgroup and individual characteristic simultaneously had the significant influence to the lecturers' job satisfaction Social Science Faculties of Airlangga University in Surabaya. It means the stronger the organizational stressor on lecturer, the lower the job satisfaction of lecturer. Another study from Widyastuti (2008) indicated that the organizational stressors simultaneously have significant influences on job satisfaction. It means that organizational stressors must be controled and managed in order to prevent stressful workplace that may lead to the increasing of job stress among university academic staff.

Despite, many studies have done in examining the impact of job insecurity in workplace (Probst & Brubaker 2001; Hellgren & Sverke, 2003; Kivimaki, Vahtera, Pentti, & Ferrie, 2000), but the study that verified the role of religious coping as moderator variable is few in current literatures. Whether religious coping may modifies the impact of job insecurity on job stress remains an open question and unclear, especially in Javanese culture sample. Beside that, many studies was conducted on western culture, and the theory of job insecurity was created and tested in western culture. Whether the prediction of theory remain valid in other context is still questionable and doubtful. In order to fill in this gap of knowledge, then present study was conducted to answer and examine the relationship between job insecurity as antecedent variable, religious coping as moderator, and job stress as dependent variable on Javanese academic staff.

The purpose of present study is to examine whether religious coping has a central role as moderator to job stress. it could be assumed that the factors of religious coping can buffer the impact of job insecurity to job stress. In other word the effects of job insecurity may be decrease on high religious person. Religious coping is predicted to buffer the relationship between job insecurity and job stress, such that religious coping is related to low job stress only for academic staff under stress (those with adverse work stressors).

#### 2. Method

#### 2.1 Participants

The sample of the current study was 155 Javanese academic staff from one private university in Jogjakarta Indonesia, which dominantly is Javanese ethnic. Because the present study wants to test the applicability of stressor-stress theory among Javanese academic staffs samples, so researchers choose a university which has dominantly Javanese ethnic samples. The population parameters in the current study are based on academic positions that are tutor, lecturer, senior lecturer, and associate professor. This parameter will be used to stratified the population become several subgroups. Then the sampling method that utilized was stratified random sampling (Sekaran, 2007). Frequencies for the respondent's demographic are presented in Table 1.

## 2.2. Measures

## 2.2.1 Job stress.

Job Stress Scale (JSS) that was adapted from Stress Indicators Scale (2007) and revised by researcher will measure job stress variable. Before JSS is used, the reliability and validity will be analyzed with internal consistency technique by Cronbach alpha. The result of JSS Cronbach's alpha is 0.912, with corrected item-total correlation range 0.294 to 0.787. This scale was composed of twenty-one items each answered on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "frequently"

## 2.2.2 Job insecurity.

Job insecurity will be measured by job insecurity scale based on Hellgren, Sverke & Isaksson (1999), Rosenblatt & Ruvio (1996) and, Israel, & House (1994) theory, then researcher made several refinement on the items. The Cronbach alpha score for six items was .946, with item-total correlation ranging .744 to .932.

## 2.2.3 Religious coping.

Religious Spiritual coping in this research will be used Pargament et al RCOPE scale. Pargament, Smith, Koenig, and Perez (1998) developed a sub scale by selecting 21 items from the RCOPE dimensions discussed earlier. The brief religious coping scale consisted 5 items and will be used to measure religious spiritual coping in this research. The Cronbach alpha score for five items was .946, with item-total correlation ranging .721 to .954.

## 2.2 Data analysis

Moderated regression analysis was used for testing interaction effects (Holmbeck, 2002; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed to detect main effects and interaction effects of job insecurity and job stress with one moderator variables that is religious coping. In order to test interaction effects, multiplicative terms were created for the standardized independent variables (Aiken, & West, 1991).

The hierarchical regression analysis used in the present study was carried out in three stages for each of the two outcome measures. At step one, job insecurity was entered, and at step two, religious coping was entered. Finally the two-way interactions between job insecurity and religious coping were entered to test the effect of moderator variable on outcome variable. All variable was centered before analyzing using hierarchical regression analysis.

#### 3. Result

The result of correlation analysis showed a relationship between job insecurity, religious coping, and job stress. Job insecurity has an association with job stress (r = .303 p < .001). But job insecurity did not has a significant association with religious coping (r = .026 p < .01), while religious coping has an associations with job stress (r = .203 p < .05). The result of reliabilities, means, and standard deviations presented in table 2 below. The correlation between all variables presented in Table 3.

A sequential hierarchical regression analysis was employed to build a model for predicting job stress. In the first step one predictors were added: job insecurity. This model was statistically significant, F(1, 153) = 15.516, p < .001, adjusted  $R^2 = .086$ . and job insecurity had a significant unique effect, with job stress. The greater the job insecurity the greater the job stress experienced by Javanese academic staff.

Religious coping was entered in the second step. Addition of this predictor significantly increased the fit of the model to the data, F(1, 152) = 7.829, p < .01),  $sr^2 = .044$ . The resulting model  $R^2$  was significantly greater than zero, F(2, 152) = 12.081, p < .001, adjusted  $R^2 = .125$ .

Interaction variable (moderator) was entered in the third step. Addition of this predictor did significantly increase the model  $R^2$ , F(1, 151) = 6.266, p = .006,  $sr^2 = .034$ . The resulting model  $R^2$  was significantly greater than zero, F(3,151) = 10.278, p < .001, adjusted  $R^2 = .154$ .

The final model (with all variables standardized) was job stress = .315\*Job insecurity -.216\*Religious coping -.186\*Interaction. The interaction is illustrated in Figure 1, where the relationship between job insecurity and job stress is plotted for low religious coping-total (one standard deviation below the mean), mean religious coping-total, and high religious coping-total (one standard deviation above the mean). The effect of job insecurity on job stress increases as religious coping-total decrease. The interaction regression line as depicted below. The form of the two-way interaction between job insecurity and religious coping shows in figure 2 below.

# 4. Discussion

Present study examined relationship between job insecurity, religious coping and job stress. The result showed

that job insecurity has a significantly positive relationship with job stress. The greater job insecurity, then the more job stress experienced by person. But the impact of job insecurity on job stress was moderated by utility of religious coping used by academic staff. Before discussing the interaction terms, the effects of the predictor variables are first considered.

The results showed that job insecurity was a significant predictor for job stress. This is consistent with past studies showing that job insecurity explains for substantial variance in job stress measures. Many previous studies have shown that job insecurity related to job attitudes such as satisfaction (Probst & Brubaker, 2001), organizational attitudes such as organizational commitment and trust, and psychological and physical well-being outcomes (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003; Kivimaki, Vahtera, Pentti, & Ferrie, 2000). A few studies have identified additional work-related behaviors such as increased job search behavior (Adkins, Werbel, & Farh, 2001; Reisel & Banai, 2002) or safety (Probst & Brubaker, 2001).

Many past studies has conclusion that work stressor like job insecurity will cause unfavorable consequences for employees (Cheng et al. 2005). For example, job insecurity implies uncontrollability and feelings of powerlessness, which known to be related to poor well-being (De Witte 1999). As Borg and Elizur (1992) noted, a causal relationship exists, with job insecurity causing various phenomenon, such as lower trust in management, and not vice versa. While, Lee et al (2004) described that during 4 years they found coronary heart disease deaths cases of myocardial infarction (MI) and 41 coronary heart disease (CHD) deaths). After adjustment for a wide array of potential confounders, the relative risk of total CHD over 2-year follow-up was 1.35 (95% CI, 0.78–2.34) and 1.04 (95% CI, 0.69–1.57) over 4-year follow-up. Job insecurity appeared to significantly increase the risk of non-fatal MI in the short term.

Meanwhile the mechanism interaction could be explained here, when person religious coping is high, then the impact of job insecurity on job stress will decrease. Whereas when person religious coping is low and job insecurity is high, then the effect of job insecurity on job stress increase. It could be stated that religious coping buffers the impact of job insecurity on job stress, so religious coping moderate and modifies the impact of job insecurity on job stress among Javanese academic staff.

The result of interaction effect of religious coping is consistent with past studies. Study by Noor (2008) showed significant three-way interactions between work experience, age, and religiosity in the prediction of well-being in Malay Muslim women (measured by distress symptoms and life satisfaction). Religiosity has a moderator effect and moderate negative work experiences on well-being.

Kasberger's (2002) study showed that religious coping reduced the amount of stress. The use of religious coping mechanisms positively correlated with the level of post-divorce adjustment in young adults who have divorced parents. Same result was showed by Holland, & Neimeyer. (2005) that indicated daily spiritual experiences might mitigate physical, cognitive, and emotional forms of burnout in the workplace.

Psychologically, religious and spiritual beliefs can be understood as being a part of a person's cognitive schema and how he or she interpret the world. Religious beliefs influenced how people form ideas and attribution of the world, how they appraise and interpret the world (Carone and Barone, 2001). In religious beliefs there is a cognitive schema and, as with other schema, involve cognitive heuristics (e.g., cognitive shortcuts) based on religious beliefs.

Four main reasons were given by Koenig (2001) to help explain the often beneficial connection between religion and psychological (and physical) health. First, reason is that religion create a meaning when person faced a problem in their life. Religion does so by creating and forming to a generally positive worldview, because the attribution of God most gracious and merciful, and attribution that God always helping His servant. This attribution will creates a sense of optimism. and those who are religious are better able to interpret positive and negative experiences as purposeful and meaningful, thus instilling a sense of hopefulness. This meaning-making structure lends itself to more positive feelings and ideas than does a purposeless and chance-ridden view of the world.

Second reason is by religious practice and religious experience; individuals are able to create positive emotions that have associated with mental health. The positive feelings about religion can prevent individuals wanting to involve in pleasurable but health-hazardous behaviors. In addition, positive emotions that come from religion practice and experience may buffer the daily hassles and stress. The third reason is through rituals and rites of passage, religion can increase the positive psychological outcome by providing community support during major life changes like marriage and death. The religious community promotes altruism, generosity, and forgiveness attitude that enhance the meaningful of individual life. Through these religious practices and beliefs, communities are strengthened and expanded, providing individuals access to greater social support while also

strengthening familial bonds. Finally, religion creates a framework through which social mores can be understood and followed. In this way, the avoidance of certain behaviors (e.g., criminal behavior, substance abuse) that can lead to negative mental and physical health consequences is encouraged and strengthened in the religious community (Koening, 2001).

#### 5. Conclusion

The result of this study showed that religious coping moderates the effects of job insecurity on job stress. The role of religious coping as a moderator variable in modifying the impact of stressor on job stress confirms previous research which found that religiosity or religious coping plays an important role in reducing and buffering the effect of job stressors in a person. In the practical knowledge, the development of meaningful religiosity and religious coping is highly recommended as a source of individual strength to cope with the demands and the increasing of work stressors. The suggestion for future study should includes demographic and personality variables that may have impact on job stress, like self-efficacy, self-control, and others, in order to have more comprehensive understanding about the nature, mechanism, and effect of work related stressor-job stress.

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Variables	Content	Frequency	Percent
	Male	70	45.2
Gender	Female	85	54.8
Age	20-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 50	37 61 42 10 3 2	23.9 39.4 27.1 6.5 1.9 1.3
Academic Position	Tutor Lecturer Senior lecturer Assoc	17 106 28 4	7.3 69.4 21.8 1.6
Job Status	professor Part-time Full time	.6	3.9
	contract Fulltime permanent	93	60

Table 1. Frequency and percents of respondent's demographic data	Table 1. Frequency and	d percents of respon	ndent's demographic	data
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Table 2. Reliabilities, Means, and Standard Deviations for Leadership, job insecurity, and job stress

Variables	α	М	SD
Job insecurity	.946	27	3.76
Job stress responses	.912	41.58	10.36
Religious coping	.946	24	3.56

Table 3. Correlation between job insecurity, religious coping and job stress

Variables	1	2	3
1. Job stress	1.00	.303**	203*
2. Job Insecurity	.303**	1.00	.026
3. Religious coping	203*	.026	1.00
4. Moderator	170*	.031	025

Significantly greater (p < .05). Note: \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01. \*\*\*P<.001

Variables	F	Adj	β	р
	(df)	$\mathbb{R}^2$		
Job Insecurity	15.516	.086	.315	p <.001
	(1,153)			
Religious	12.081	.125	216	p <.001
coping	(2,152)			
Moderator	10.278	.154	186	p <.001
	(3,151)			

Table 4. Model summary, ANOVA, coefficient on job insecurity, religious coping and moderator

Significantly greater (p < .05). Note: \*p < .05 \*\*p < .01.P < .001

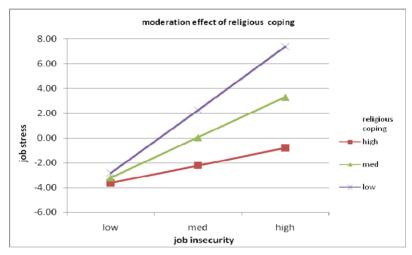


Figure 1. The relationship between job insecurity and job stress among Javanese academic staff at high and low level of religious coping

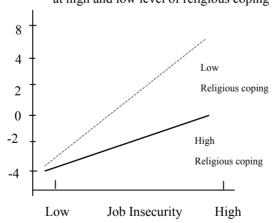


Figure 2. The relationship between job insecurity and job stress among Javanese academic staff at high and low level of religious coping