

Care or Climate? Decoding Psychological Well-Being Pathways in Malaysia's F&B Workforce

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In Malaysia's food and beverage industry, employees operate under demanding conditions where sustaining psychological well-being has become increasingly critical. Yet, the mechanisms through which organisational environments foster well-being remain insufficiently understood. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory and the Job Demands–Resources Model, we examine how psychosocial safety climate influences psychological well-being through perceived organisational support and work engagement. Our results indicate that psychosocial safety climate significantly enhances perceived organisational support, work engagement, and psychological well-being. In turn, both perceived organisational support and work engagement positively contribute to psychological well-being. These findings highlight that a supportive psychosocial climate operates as a critical organisational resource, activating both relational (support-based) and motivational (engagement-driven) pathways to enhance employee well-being. Practical implications emphasize the importance of cultivating psychologically safe and supportive work environments in labor-intensive service sectors.

Keywords: Malaysia; F&B; Psychosocial Safety Climate; Perceived Organisational Support; Work Engagement; Psychological Well-Being.

INTRODUCTION

Food and beverage (F&B) sector stand as one of the most labor-reliant fields in developing economies, including Malaysia. Despite its economic prominence, this sector is characterized by chronic workplace pressures- long hours, emotional labour, and strict clients' expectations that are strongly linked to elevated stress, occupational fatigue, and turnover (Salama et al., 2022). These problems provide a significant inquiry: how does the broader organizational environment influence the psychological well-being of F&B employees? Mental wellness- a complex concept covering emotional balance, career satisfaction, and general psychological health (Dhanabhakym and Sarath, 2023), is increasingly recognized as central to organisational sustainability, research examining the psychological pathways through which workplace climate influences well-being in the Malaysian F&B context remains limited.

The current literature recognizes the importance of psychological organisational policies in safeguarding employee psychological well-being (Zadow et al., 2023). Perceived organisational support (POS) defined as the workforce's conviction that the company truly appreciates their efforts (Kurtessis et al., 2017), and work engagement, marked by high energy, commitment, and deep focus, have also been identified as close predictors of mental health (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2015). However, prior studies have largely examined these constructs in isolation without adequately exploring the mediated pathways through which PSC shapes well-being via POS and work engagement which is a gap this study directly addresses. Based on Social Exchange Theory, this study proposes that a positive mental safety environment nurtures both perceived organisational support and work engagement, elements that subsequently drive employee mental wellness (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

The main goal of this research is to investigate the mental health trajectories among employees in Malaysia's food and beverage industry by testing a dual-mediation model in which PSC impacts mental wellness directly as well as via the parallel mediators of POS and active job involvement. The novelty of this research is in its cohesive framework, which simultaneously positions POS and work engagements as mediating mechanisms by capturing both organisational-level care and individual-level resource mobilization within a single model rooted in the principles of Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Job-Demand Resources (JD-R) Theory. This study contributes to organisational behaviour and occupational health literature by clarifying the mechanisms that link to workplace climate to employee well-being in an underexplored emerging economy context. The findings offer practical recommendations for food and beverage organisations, and policymakers aiming to upgrade psychosocial work conditions, strengthen organisational support, and promote sustainable workforce well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychosocial Safety Climate, Perceived Organisational Support, and Work Engagement.

PSC means how employees collectively feel about the way their organisation uses policies, everyday actions, and routines to protect their mental health and psychological well-being at work (Dollard and Bakker, 2010). When the workforce stays strong and the organisation succeeds in the long run, it means their employees are happy and healthy (Barnes et al., 2022). According to organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 2020), employees will form a general perception about how much their company values their work and cares about their health. Employees will feel the organisation cares about them when the organisation implements policies that prioritise worker psychological health and safety. For example, F&B management can implement a time pressure policy,

a job role clarity policy, a mental health leave policy, and actively support work-life balance. Through these policies, it creates a positive psychosocial safety environment that can convey to F&B employees that they are valued as human beings, not merely as production resources, thereby enhancing employees' perception of the company's support. According to social exchange theory, employees will think about why those policies were created and what the organisation's real intentions are, rather than just responding to the policies (Ahmad et al., 2023). Successful exchanges will transform a preliminary economic exchange into a social exchange relationship (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Unlike purely economic exchanges, social exchanges are relational, long-term, and diffuse. When employees perceive a strong PSC, they understand that the organisation has made a discretionary investment in their psychological welfare. This perception transforms the employee-organisation relationship from a calculative exchange into a committed social exchange. Hence, we propose:

H1: Psychosocial safety climate positively affects perceived organisational support.

The JD-R model posits that job resources such as autonomy, social support, and growth opportunities help employees perform their work more effectively, manage job stress more easily, and develop as individuals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). A PSC is an organisational-level job resource that signals to employees that they can share concerns, take risks, and learn without fear of negative consequences. According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, employees try to protect and gain resources. A strong PSC gives employees 'resource caravans' — groups of resources that create even more resources over time (Holmgren, 2017). When F&B employees feel that their organisation truly values psychological safety, they experience less emotional exhaustion and greater psychological availability. Both of these are key factors that lead to higher WE. From a self-determination theory perspective, a PSC supports the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs, which are autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). When these three needs are satisfied in the Malaysia's F&B workplace, employees transition from controlled motivation to autonomous (intrinsic) motivation, wherein they engage in work activities because they find them inherently interesting, enjoyable, and personally meaningful rather than due to external pressures or rewards. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H2: Psychosocial safety climate positively affects work engagement.

The Direct impact of Psychosocial Safety Climate on Psychological Well-Being

PWB of employees is important as it will affect performance and productivity, workplace stress, organisational citizenship behavior, commitment, attendance, and withdrawal intention (Khalid and Syed, 2023). PWB is closely related to emotions and mental health which means how the employee thinks, feels, reacts, and behave (Mohan et al., 2021). PWB can be assessed through several dimensions such as anxiety, depressed mood, general health, and vitality which are all influenced by the organisational climate that employees experience daily (Grossi et al., 2006). Organisational environments can effectively shape the employees' well-being through a well-structured workplace, managerial support, fair treatment, and team spirit (Dumitriu et al., 2025). PSC are key organisational factors because mental health is an outcome of the interplay between employees and their social or physical environments (Dong et al., 2024).

PSC is defined as the extent to which an organisation's policies and management practices actively protect the psychological health and safety of its employees (Hall et al., 2010). According to COR theory, employees are driven to protect and preserve their valued resources. When these resources are threatened or lost, psychological stress is likely to follow (Hobfoll, 1989). By promoting organisational culture, PSC can directly reduce or eliminate psychological hazards and mistreatment through prioritizing worker health and safety (Amoadu et al., 2024). In a high-PSC workplace, managers take an active role in identifying and addressing harmful psychosocial risks, including workplace

bullying, sexual harassment, and excessive job demands. Through protecting or conserving emotional resources like time, energy and mood support, employees avoid using much emotional labor to deal with conflict or unfair treatment which can reduce emotional exhaustion. Employees feel more energized and build more resource caravans that contribute a large positive impact on psychological well-being (Holmgreen, 2017). Moreover, a strong PSC is an important buffer that reframes employees' perceptions towards challenge demands. It helps avoid mobilizing effort, which results in burnout by making high pressure tasks manageable and supported (Teoh et al., 2021). PSC guarantees the going concern of hard work and turning it into a sustainable effort instead of a cause of psychological impairment.

In Malaysia's context, the F&B industry is categorized as a high interpersonal interaction level and significant emotional labor. Therefore, PSC is critical to protect workers from exhaustion and enhance mental health. Hence, we propose: **H3: Psychosocial safety climate positively affects psychological well-being.**

The Impact of Perceived Organisational Support and Work Engagement on Psychological Well-Being.

POS functions as a highly significant organisational resource. According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), POS reflects the extent to which employees believe their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. In the context of the Malaysian Food & Beverage (F&B) industry, employees often face high job demands, such as intense interpersonal interactions and long working hours. Ensuring the psychological well-being of these workers is increasingly recognized as a vital component of overall industry sustainability (Kee et al., 2023). When employees feel a high degree of organisational support, it not only protects the negative effects of these stressful stressors but also generates a positive social exchange. Employees develop greater psychological resilience particularly when management is present to offer tangible support during difficult customer interactions or peak operating times. This back-and-forth relationship means workers don't feel isolated in their struggles. Stress and emotional exhaustion are less likely for employees who feel supported and cared for. Instead, this nurturing environment satisfies their socio-emotional needs, resulting in a more positive emotional state and greatly improving their overall psychological health. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H4: Perceived organisational support positively affects psychological well-being.

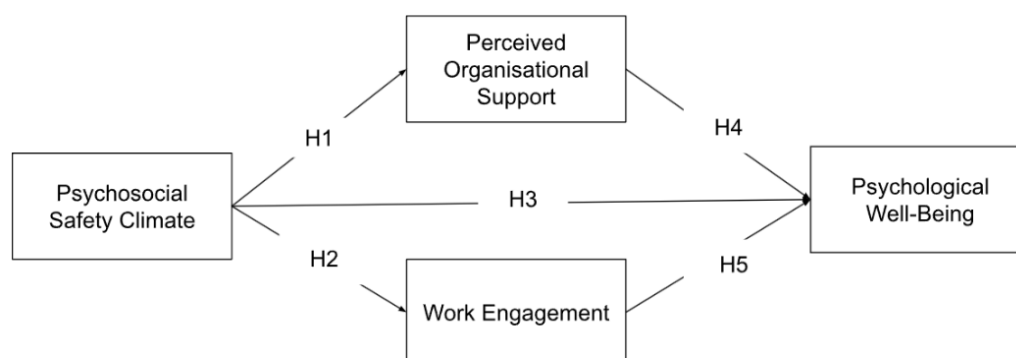
WE as an intrinsically rewarding psychological connection to one's profession, distinguished by high levels of mental resilience, deep focus, and strong emotional commitment (Schaufeli et al., 2006). From the perspective of the JD-R model, engaged employees are those who successfully utilize their job and personal resources to manage job demands. In the fast-paced F&B sector, engaged workers do not merely perform their tasks; they are deeply immersed and enthusiastic about their roles. Employees who are highly engaged are also more likely to view a difficult customer request as a manageable task rather than an aggressive task. This proactive attitude allows them to derive real personal pride from their daily service interactions. This positive psychological state generates intrinsic motivation and energy, protecting employees from burnout. Work engagement, which involves positive affect and a sense of achievement, directly helps to reduce workplace stress and promote a healthier mental state. Consequently, this continuous energetic connection to work activities translates into enhanced PWB (Grossi et al., 2006). Hence, we propose:

H5: Work engagement positively affects psychological well-being.

Conceptual Framework

The study framework model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and Procedures

To investigate the mental health trajectories of Malaysian food and beverage personnel, this research utilized a quantitative survey approach. The eligibility criteria for participant screening included the following: (1) individual who currently working in the Food & Beverage (F&B) industry (2) individual who have been working in their current organisation 6 months or more (3) employed full-time in the F&B industry located within Malaysia. Over a two weeks window in April 2026, we deployed a digital questionnaire via Google Forms. The survey gathered fundamental socioeconomic details alongside structured scale responses. We initially received 150 submissions. However, data cleaning removed seven entries that did not meet the screening criteria. The final dataset of 143 qualified responses underwent descriptive, correlational, and regression testing utilizing SPSS Version 28.

Measures

Quantified the targeted variables using established academic instruments tailored for the Malaysian F&B context. All items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Except for psychological well-being, which was adapted from established scales (Kee et al., 2023; Yo et al., 2021). Cronbach's alpha values for the test ranged between 0.487 and 0.596.

Psychosocial Safety Climate A twelve-item scale developed by Hall et al. (2010). The utility of this scale in evaluating organisational prioritization of psychological health has been extensively validated in recent Malaysian occupational studies, confirming its relevance in high-stress service environments such as the hospitality and healthcare sectors (Ismail et al., 2025; Juliana et al., 2022). Sample items include "Psychological well-being of staff is a priority for this organisation" and "Senior management acts decisively when a concern of an employee's psychological status is raised." anchored the assessment, generating a reliability coefficient of 0.487.

Perceived Organisational Support

Assessed corporate backing through a 16-scale tool derived from (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This framework reliably reflects how strongly service workers feel their workplace appreciates their efforts and welfare (Mubashar & Harzer, 2023). Responses to statements like "The organisation values my contribution to its well-being." Cronbach's alpha score of 0.519.

Work Engagement

Job involvement was gauged via Schaufeli et al. (2006) 9-item framework, which targets worker absorption, dedication, and vitality. Prompts like “At my work, I feel bursting with energy” and “I am enthusiastic about my job.” were used, achieving an internal consistency of 0.596.

Psychological Well-Being

Adapted a six-item short version of the Psychological General Well-Being Index (Grossi et al. (2006). Evaluated on the uniform 5-point scale mentioned above, the module included reflections such as “I felt downhearted and blue during the past month” and “I was emotionally stable and sure of myself during the past month.” concluding with a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.524.

RESULTS

Table 1. Summary of Respondents’ Demographic Information (N =143)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
18 - 25 years old	90	62.9
26 - 30 years old	3	2.1
31 - 35 years old	13	9.1
36 - 40 years old	6	4.2
41 - 45 years old	17	11.9
46 - 50 years old	10	7.0
Above 50 years old	4	2.8
Gender		
Male	70	49.0
Female	73	51.0
Race		
Malay	56	39.2
Chinese	53	37.1
Indian	34	23.8
Educational level		
Secondary school	1	0.7
High school diploma or equivalent	34	23.8
Bachelor’s degree	71	49.7
Master’s degree	21	14.7
Doctorate degree	16	11.2
Monthly income level		
B40 (below or equal to RM5,859)	50	35.0
M40 (between RM5,860 and RM12,679)	48	33.6
T20 (above or equal to RM12,680)	45	31.5
Type of F&B establishment		
Café	37	25.9
Catering service	31	21.7
Fast food chain	46	32.2
Restaurant	29	20.3

The research sample profiles are shown in Table 1 which collected a total of 143 responses. The gender of the sample was distributed almost equally with 73 women (51.0%) and 70 men (49.0%). Most participants fell within the 18 to 25 age group (N=90, 62.9%), whereas the 26 to 30 age group recorded the smallest representation (N=3, 2.1%). With regard to race, Malay respondents led the group (N=56, 39.2%), followed by Chinese (N=53, 37.1%) and Indian (N=34, 23.8%). Regarding education level, individuals with bachelor's degree (N=71, 49.7%) formed the largest group while the only single respondent was secondary school (N=1, 0.7%). Regarding monthly income level, the distribution was also nearly equal with B40 (N=50, 35.0%), M40 (N=48, 33.6%) followed by T20 (N=45, 31.5%). As for the type of F&B establishment, most respondents were working in fast food chains (N=46, 32.2%) while the least type was restaurants (N=29, 20.3%). This diverse demographic of respondents supports the generalizability of research results which represent the wider range of workers in the Malaysia F&B industry.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha, and Zero-order Correlations for all study variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Psychosocial Safety Climate	0.487			
2. Perceived Organisational Support	0.280***	0.519		
3. Work Engagement	0.200*	0.424***	0.596	
4. Psychological Well-Being	0.294***	0.351***	0.352***	0.524
Number of Items	12	16	9	6
Mean	4.3100	4.3086	4.3155	4.1352
Standard Deviation	0.36811	0.33798	0.53036	0.64820

Note: N=143; $p^ < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$. The diagonal entries represent Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha.*

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics, measures of reliability, and zero-order correlations among the study variables. The tested variables demonstrate Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.487 to 0.596.

First, the descriptive statistics show that the respondents (N = 143) had generally positive perceptions on all measured constructs. The highest mean score was for work engagement (WE) (M=4.32, SD=0.53), which indicated that the employees in this sample felt very committed and absorbed in their work. PSC (M = 4.31, SD = 0.37) POS (M = 4.31, SD = 0.34) is ranked closely after this and indicates the perception that the organisation is caring and supportive of employees' psychological health. PWB also presented a moderately high mean (M = 4.14, SD = 0.65). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the variables ranged from 0.487 to 0.596, which indicated an internal consistency of the scales. We also performed Pearson correlation analysis to explore early relationships between variables. The results show that all study variables have a positive and significant relationship with each other. This is a good initial support to the expected relationships. POS was, importantly, moderately, positively and highly significantly correlated with WE ($r = 0.424$, $p < 0.001$) and PWB ($r = 0.351$, $p < 0.001$). This means that when employees are valued and supported by the organisation, they are more likely to be engaged and have improved psychological health. PSC was also significantly positively correlated with POS ($r = 0.280$, $p < .001$), PWB ($r = 0.294$, $p < .001$) and slightly weaker but still significantly correlated with WE ($r = 0.200$, $p < .05$). Finally, a significant positive correlation is found between WE and PWB ($r = .352$, $p < .001$). In all, this correlation matrix confirms that positive organisational climate and work

engagement are strongly correlated with the psychological well-being of the employees, thus forming the basis for further predictive analysis.

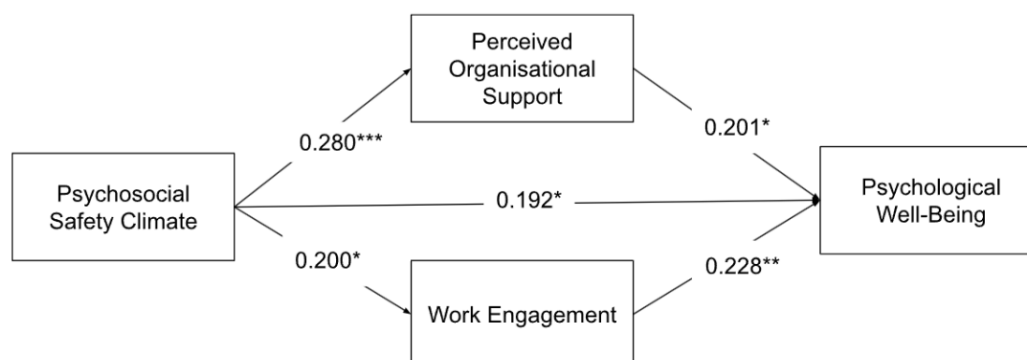
Table 3. Regression Results

Variables	Perceived Organisational Support	Work Engagement	Psychological Well-Being
Psychosocial Climate	0.280***	0.200*	0.192*
Perceived Organisational Support			0.201*
Work Engagement			0.228**
R^2	0.078	0.040	0.207
F value	11.987	5.890	12.104
Durbin-Watson Statistic	1.643	2.041	1.926

Note: N=143; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Standardized coefficients beta are reported.

The results in Table 3 show that the regression analysis tests the relationship between PWB and the independent variables: PSC, POS, and WE. The sample size of this study was 143 participants. Data shows that the PSC plays a crucial role. First, PSC has the strongest positive impact on POS, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.280***. PSC showed a significant direct positive effect on WE, with a beta value of 0.200*. Since both relationships are statistically significant and positively correlated, H1 and H2 are fully supported. When looking at the direct impact on the primary outcome, PSC has a direct positive effect on PWB (0.192*). This statistical significance supports H3, indicating that a safer psychosocial environment can directly improve employee well-being. The result also shows that POS (0.201*), and WE (0.228**) have a significant relationship with PWB. Consequently, these findings confirm the statistical support for both H4 and H5. Among the three models, the highest explanatory power is the R^2 value of 20.7% (0.207) in PWB. All models have high F value (5.890 to 12.104), indicating that the predictor variables have a statistically significant collective effect on the dependent outcomes. Durbin-Watson Statistic values range between 1.643 and 2.041. Overall, the data shows that all five hypotheses are empirically supported, and all hypotheses show significant positive correlations.

Figure 2. Overview Result



Note: Standardized coefficients are reported.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Psychosocial Safety Climate on Perceived Organisational Support and Work Engagement

The findings show that PSC has the strongest effect on POS and a direct effect on WE among employees in the Malaysian F&B industry. The strong effect between PSC and POS highlights that an organisation prioritises employee's psychological safety and health in the workplace, leading employees to perceive that the organisation cares about their well-being. When PSC is high, the organisation focuses on humanistic care and prosocial values and creates a supportive and healthy work environment that fosters positive interpersonal relationships and communication. (Yulita et al. 2022). When employees observe policies and practices designed to protect their mental well-being, they interpret these initiatives as a clear sign of full organisational support. However, when F&B management shifts their focus from productivity to employee well-being and safety, excessively high work demands may be reduced in order to protect employee health (Amodu et al., 2023). Thus, a high-PSC environment sends a clear signal that human resources are valued above mere productivity, directly fostering higher POS (Dollard & Bakker, 2010).

Similarly, there is a significant positive relationship between PSC and WE. According to Dera et al. (2025), when organisations prioritise the personal, social, and cultural aspects of the work environment, they can protect employees from socio-psychological risks, thereby gaining additional personal resources by increasing their positive emotions and engagement, and shaping their mindset by helping them discover the appeal and enjoyment of their work. A high-PSC environment safeguards psychological health, boosting employee engagement, and positive emotion. This mindset expands employees' cognitive scope and activities, makes work more engaging, and fosters creative problem-solving and practice (Zadow et al., 2023).

The Direct Influence of Psychosocial Safety Climate on Psychological Well-Being

Beyond its indirect effects through POS and WE, the results also confirm that PSC positively and significantly influences PWB. This relationship can be explained through COR theory, which proposes that individuals strive to obtain, maintain, and protect valuable personal resources such as emotional energy, positive mood, and resilience. If these resources are consumed without adequate replenishment, employees tend to experience burnout. In a high-PSC environment, management establishes policies to prioritise PWB and discourage overtime, thus ensuring that employees' emotional resources are protected. The lower the emotional exhaustion, the higher the PWB of

staff. Furthermore, strong PSC fundamentally affects working conditions and directly safeguards employee well-being (Amoadu et al., 2025).

Based on research conducted in the Klang Valley, most employees in Malaysia's F&B industry perceived high organisational stress, stemming from long working hours and demanding customers (Amran et al., 2018). Although the direct effect of PSC on PWB is comparatively modest relative to other factors in the model, this does not undermine its significance. Rather, it suggests that efficient protection of employee PWB is achieved through management action and the establishment of organisation policies, rather than surface level commitments. Similar observations were reported by Teoh et al. (2021), who found that PSC helps employees cope more effectively with demanding work conditions and reduces the likelihood of burnout in Malaysia's service industry. Collectively, these findings emphasise the value of maintaining a strong and consistent PSC to support psychological well-being in labour-intensive service settings such as the Malaysian F&B industry.

The Role of Perceived Organizational Support and Work Engagement on Psychological Well-Being

The results strongly indicate that POS has an important beneficial impact on PWB of employees in the F&B industry. POS is a vital buffer against workplace stress in a demanding environment with long operating hours and intense interpersonal interactions. These interactions have become increasingly complex and demanding, as modern customer expectations and purchasing behaviors in the Malaysian F&B market are heavily influenced by social media and key opinion leaders (Ng et al., 2023). According to the JD-R framework, support from the company functions as an essential structural resource, effectively neutralizing the detrimental impacts of excessive workplace pressures (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). For example, F&B employees feel a deep sense of security and belonging when management cares about their health and values their contributions, such as by supporting them in dealing with difficult customers (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This fulfills their socio-emotional needs and greatly reduces the chances of emotional burnout and anxiety. Hence, this positive social exchange helps employees to maintain a healthier and more stable mental state, directly elevating their overall PWB.

In addition, the findings also show a strong positive correlation linking WE directly to PWB. Employees who are deeply engaged typically exhibit profound emotional commitment, intense focus, and abundant mental resilience during their routine tasks (Schaufeli et al., 2006). In the fast-paced Malaysian F&B industry, highly engaged workers don't merely use up energy, they generate it through a positive relationship with their roles. As per the motivational process of the JD-R model, this positive psychological state encourages employees' intrinsic motivation and protects employees from job burnout (Lesener et al., 2019). Engaged employees experience more positive affect and personal accomplishment by perceiving challenging service encounters as manageable and rewarding tasks rather than burdensome emotional labor.

Theoretical Implications

This study provides strong empirical support for two well-known organisational frameworks which are SET and JD-R Theory by confirming these pathways among workers in the Malaysian F&B industry. SET is widely regarded as one of the most influential frameworks in the social sciences, described as "one of the gold standards to understand workplace behavior" (Ahmad et al., 2023). PSC is a high-value organisational investment. When management introduces policies to protect employee mental health, they initiate a high-quality social exchange. Employees first reciprocate this goodwill by increasing their perceived value (POS), and ultimately by improving their PWB. In

contrast, a low-PSC environment diminishes employee well-being and compromises their ability to effectively manage their emotions (Butvilas et al., 2023). Moreover, when employers provide good working conditions, employees feel a psychological obligation to repay them with a positive attitude and excellent performance. For example, F&B employees often view management demonstrating care for and prioritising their well-being to help them, which instills in them a sense of responsibility to give back to the restaurant, such as by improving performance and engaging more actively (AJOB et al., 2025). Thus, high PSC positively affects both WE and PWB among employees in the Malaysian F&B industry.

The JD-R model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how employee well-being, job characteristics, and organisational outcomes interact. Crucially, the model categorises work environments into two distinct elements: job demands and job resources (Li et al., 2025). In this model, POS is regarded as an essential job resource that enhances motivation by offering emotional support, instrumental help, and a feeling of safety. Positively evaluated support from an organisation helps employees cope with job-related strain, especially from demanding and emotionally taxing customer interactions (PWB), at a higher level (Yusof, F., 2025). Additionally, neglecting important mental health maintenance in favour of high-intensity work demands can severely deplete employee's energy. In environments lacking a strong PSC, this excessive focus can limit opportunities for self-regulation and lead to negative mental health consequences (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). In the high-demand F&B environment, structural job resources are often scarce. However, a strong PSC sparks a motivational process that not only enables employees to be more engaged (Dera et al., 2025) but also directly feeds into their overall PWB.

In short, SET and JD-R theory work together to provide a thorough, dual-process account of how PSC affects well-being. Moreover, it explains how the organisational macro-climate, through both structural and relational pathways, directly and indirectly safeguards employee mental health within high-pressure environments, such as Malaysia's F&B industry.

Practical Implications

Based on the findings of H1, H3, and H4, management of Malaysia F&B industry should formalize PSC through specific organisational regulation and policies. For example, establish a reasonable workload management system, clarify job responsibilities and division of labor, ensure segregation of duties, implement a mental health leave policy, encourage open conversation through meetings and provide constructive feedback systems. Through these policies, employees feel a sense of safety as the company prioritises their mental health. When they realize these institutionalized forms of psychological support, they interpret them as a sign that the company values their contributions. This perception transforms into a higher level of POS, which directly increases PWB based on the result of H4 (Eisenberger et al., 1986). During peak hours or when facing highly demanding customers, managers should step in proactively to reduce the stress of staff and protect them from external threats. All these visible PSC drive up both POS and PWB (Amodu et al., 2024).

Apart from organisational support, PSC is also able to stimulate WE to increase PWB based on findings of H2 and H5. F&B managers should redesign job roles to enable their staff to feel a greater sense of meaning and purpose in their work. Role monotony should be minimized to prevent disengagement and reduced motivation. For example, provide performance-based incentives, organise employee recognition programs, establish career development paths, and encourage employee participation in decision-making processes. Subsequently, the development of these psychological resources successfully translates into increased WE, which in turn systematically fosters

employees' long-term PWB (Schaufeli et al., 2006). As Malaysia F&B industry is facing high employee turnover rate and talent shortage, this situation underscores the strategic importance of cultivating a PSC-driven environment that actively fosters WE among F&B employees. This is not merely an incentive for employees; it is the long-term strategy to enable organisations to achieve sustainable growth. Therefore, promoting a workplace that prioritises PSC and systematically drives WE serves as a critical strategic imperative for reducing turnover and ensuring long-term industry sustainability, not merely employee perk (Idris et al., 2014).

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the mechanisms through which PSC influences PWB in the Malaysian F&B industry, several limitations should be noted for future research.

To begin with, the methodology utilized a cross-sectional framework, meaning all metric evaluations occurred simultaneously. Even though robust theories (such as the SET and JD-R frameworks) back our proposed connections, gathering information at one specific moment restricts our capacity to establish strict cause-and-effect linkages among workplace climate, corporate support, job involvement, and mental health (Spector, 2019). Future studies should test the direct effects of fluctuations in organisational safety climate on employee well-being and engagement over time through longitudinal or experimental designs (Lesener et al., 2019).

Second, data were collected through self-reported questionnaires only. Self-reporting is appropriate for evaluating internal states (e.g., perceived support and PWB), but it raises the concern of common method bias and social desirability bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Employees could overestimate or underestimate their WE or psychological distress. Therefore, future research is suggested to include multi-source data such as supervisor ratings on WE or objective organisational data such as employee turnover and absenteeism records.

Finally, the sample represents a diverse range of Malaysian F&B establishments, from fast food chains to independent cafes to fine dining. The work culture and resources available may vary across sub-sectors, and regional differences may be significant. Further research could be done in a comparative way on specific key food hubs such as Penang, Johor Bahru, or Klang Valley to examine whether the local culture and tourism dynamics affect the impact of PSC on F&B employees' well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to decode the underlying mechanisms connecting organizational environments to employee mental health within the highly demanding context of Malaysia's Food and Beverage (F&B) industry. Grounded in SET and the JD-R model, the research successfully established that a robust PSC acts as a critical foundational resource. The findings confirmed that when F&B organizations prioritize psychological safety, it significantly enhances both POS and WE.

Crucially, the study demonstrated a dual-mediation pathway: PSC not only directly protects employees from emotional exhaustion but also indirectly elevates their Psychological Well-Being through relational and motivational channels. By institutionalizing care and safety, organizations foster a profound sense of being valued among their workforce while simultaneously stimulating intrinsic dedication and vigour. Both mediators were proven to systematically buffer against the high job demands

characteristic of the Food & Beverages sector, resulting in healthier, more resilient employees.

Ultimately, for labor-intensive service sectors facing high turnover and talent shortages, superficial commitments to employee wellness are insufficient. The sustainability of Malaysia's Food & Beverages industry relies heavily on management's ability to formalize psychological support through tangible policies. By actively cultivating a psychologically safe and supportive work environment, organizations can transform high-pressure roles into sustainable careers, ensuring both the long-term well-being of their workforce and the enduring success of the business.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the study, authorship, and/or publication of this article. This research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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