

Mediation Effect of Employees' Well-being in the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Adaptive Performance among Malaysian Government Servants

Kesan Perantara Kesejahteraan Pekerja dalam Hubungan antara Persepsi Sokongan Organisasi dan Prestasi Adaptif Pegawai Perkhidmatan Awam di Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Perceived organizational support (POS) is vital in boosting employees' adaptive performance and well-being. Employees who hold a positive perception of their organization's support will be less stressed, happier with their work, and experience improved mental health, ultimately increasing their drive for performance and effectiveness. However, limited research has examined this relationship, particularly within the Malaysian public sector. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to determine the mediation effect of employee well-being in the relationship between POS and adaptive performance among Malaysian government servants. Grounded in the Job Demands-Resources Model and the Broaden-and-Build Theory, this study investigates both the direct influence of POS on adaptive performance and the mediating role of employee well-being. Drawing on survey data from 733 Malaysian government servants and employing multiple linear regression analysis, the findings indicate that while POS directly enhances adaptive performance, its effect is significantly amplified when mediated by employee well-being. These results highlight that employees who feel valued and supported cultivate stronger psychological resources, enabling them to adapt more effectively to organizational demands. The tested framework also offers a solid foundation for future research and intervention programs aimed at fostering employee well-being to strengthen adaptive performance.

Keywords: perceived organizational support; employees' well-being; adaptive performance; Malaysian public sector; human development

ABSTRAK

Persepsi sokongan organisasi penting dalam merangsang prestasi adaptif dan kesejahteraan pekerja. Pekerja yang mempunyai persepsi positif terhadap sokongan yang diberikan organisasi akan mempunyai kesihatan mental yang baik, merasa kurang tertekan dan lebih gembira dengan kerja yang akhirnya mendorong mereka untuk menghasilkan prestasi yang lebih baik dan berkesan. Walau bagaimanapun, sedikit kajian telah dijalankan untuk menganalisis hubungan ini, khususnya dalam sektor awam di Malaysia. Justeru, objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan kesan mediator kesejahteraan pekerja dalam hubungan antara persepsi sokongan organisasi dengan prestasi adaptif dalam kalangan kakitangan kerajaan di Malaysia. Berpandukan Model Permintaan Pekerja-Sumber dan Teori Meluas-dan-Bina, kajian ini menyiasat kedua-dua pengaruh langsung persepsi sokongan organisasi terhadap prestasi adaptif dan peranan kesejahteraan pekerja sebagai pengantara hubungan tersebut. Berdasarkan data tinjauan daripada 733 kakitangan sektor awam Malaysia, serta analisis regresi linear berganda, hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa walaupun persepsi sokongan organisasi dapat meningkatkan prestasi adaptif secara langsung, kesannya akan diperkuatkan dengan ketara apabila kesejahteraan pekerja menjadi mediator. Dapatan ini menunjukkan bahawa pekerja yang merasa dihargai dan disokong oleh organisasi akan membangun sumber psikologi yang jitu sekali gus membolehkan mereka menyesuaikan diri kepada tuntutan organisasi dengan lebih berkesan. Rangka kerja yang telah diuji dalam kajian ini juga memberikan asas yang kukuh untuk penyelidikan masa depan dan program intervensi yang mampumemupuk kesejahteraan pekerja bagi mengukuhkan prestasi adaptif.

Kata kunci: persepsi sokongan organisasi; kesejahteraan pekerja; prestasi kerja adaptif; sektor awam Malaysia; pembangunan manusia

INTRODUCTION

In the present-day volatile environment, public sector organizations are under increasing pressure to become more agile, efficient, and responsive to citizen needs (Chandratreya, 2025). Serving as the nation's foundation in its pursuit of sustained economic growth and advancement (Zabidi et al., 2024), public sector servants must have the ability to make swift and efficient responses as well as proactive decision-making. In this regard, adaptive performance has surfaced as an indispensable element for organizational success. Adaptive performance refers to an employee's capability to effectively adjust to new work conditions, technological innovations, policy shifts, and unexpected challenges (Park & Park, 2019; Pulakos et al., 2000). It is often conceptualized as a multidimensional construct, encompassing cultural adaptability, crisis responsiveness, interpersonal flexibility, and openness to innovation, all of which are essential for addressing modern societies' diverse needs (Charbonnier Voirin & Roussel, 2012).

Unlike task performance, which pertains to routine duties, adaptive performance encompasses flexibility, innovation, and responsiveness in ambiguous or evolving situations (Kim & Yoon, 2025). Thus, adaptive employees are better positioned to manage disruptions, collaborate across bureaucratic boundaries, and drive continuous improvements in public service delivery (Suardana, 2025). For this reason, adaptive performance is vitally important in the public sector, where civil servants must navigate ongoing challenges such as institutional reforms, digital transformation, political changes, and rising citizen expectations, which collectively demand flexibility and responsiveness to meet stakeholders' needs optimally.

Similar to their global counterparts, Malaysian public organizations are confronted with the dual challenge of sustaining high service quality while adapting to shifting policy directives and resource constraints (Jordan et al., 2012). To remain competitive and responsive, core attributes such as innovativeness, friendliness, responsiveness, and efficiency have been emphasized as essential components of high-quality public service (Mokhtar et al., 2015). In light of these challenges, the Malaysian government recognizes public servants as pivotal agents in advancing the nation's aspirations for global competitiveness through the efficient and effective execution of public services (Nik Abd Rahman, 2006). Thus, developing a workforce that is not only competent but also adaptable and resilient has become increasingly critical to meeting the evolving demands of the public sector (Azhari et al., 2023). Consequently, these insights underscore the imperative to nurture an organizational environment that strengthens employee adaptability through robust structural and psychological resources.

Against this backdrop, perceived organizational support (POS) has garnered increasing scholarly attention for its potential to enhance employee performance outcomes, including adaptability (Muhamad Syahrom Ismail & Fatimah Wati Halim, 2021). Perceived organizational support refers to employees' perceptions of the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Research indicates that employees who perceive high organizational support are more likely to reciprocate with stronger organizational commitment, increased effort, and enhanced discretionary behaviour (Asif et al., 2023; Kebede & Wang, 2022). In addition, POS has been positively linked to various outcomes, namely job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Li et al., 2025; Sihag, 2021). However, although the relationship between POS and overall employee performance is well established, its specific linkage to adaptive performance has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. Although some studies have suggested that POS fosters adaptability by enhancing employee empowerment and well-being (Emur & Satrya, 2024; Kuang et al., 2023),

empirical evidence on this relationship remains inconclusive. Aligned with this perspective, emerging research identifies employee well-being—encompassing emotional, psychological, and social functioning—as a key psychological resource that mediates the relationship between POS and adaptive performance by enabling employees to translate organizational support into adaptive behaviours (García-Selva et al., 2025; Thanki & Pestonjee, 2021). This view is reinforced by the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Theory, which explains how work environments shape employee well-being and, in turn, performance outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Likewise, Fredrickson’s Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions (2001) posits that when employees feel supported and experience heightened well-being, they develop expanded psychological resources that enhance their capacity to respond effectively to novel and challenging demands. Therefore, enhancing psycho-emotional stability, social competence, cognitive flexibility, and behavioural resilience in the Malaysian public service is crucial for improving service delivery and overall workforce effectiveness (Bakar et al., 2020).

Considering this context, this study aims to elucidate the psychological processes through which POS enhances adaptability by examining the mediating role of employee well-being, thus providing a nuanced understanding of strategies for promoting a resilient, high-performing public sector workforce. This study is anchored in several key theoretical contributions. First, it extends prior research by empirically examining the link between POS and adaptive performance through employee well-being, thereby reinforcing the findings of Park and Park (2019). Second, unlike previous research that often relies on Expectancy Theory to explain innovative work behaviour, this study adopts the Broaden-and-Build Theory, which emphasizes the role of positive emotional states and supportive organizational environments in fostering employee adaptability. Third, by investigating the role of employee well-being as a mediating mechanism, the study aspires to demonstrate that POS not only reflects transactional reciprocity but also embodies a more profound form of organizational citizenship that stimulates ongoing adaptability and innovation.

Subsequently, to address these gaps, the study poses two main research questions: (1) how does POS influence adaptive job performance, and (2) how does employee well-being mediate the relationship between POS and adaptive job performance? The remainder of this article is organized as follows: (i) the next section reviews the literature on POS, employee well-being, and adaptive performance, along with an outline of the study’s hypotheses; (ii) the third section describes the research methodology; (iii) the fourth section, presents the results of the data analysis; (iv) the fifth section discusses the key findings, theoretical and practical implications, and overall contributions; (vi) finally, the last section concludes by highlighting the study’s limitations and offering directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As organizations at present are encountering increasing volatility and unpredictability, a resilient and highly adaptive workforce capable of effectively navigating complex, unanticipated disruptions and rapidly changing conditions is imperative. In response to these challenges, three key concepts have emerged as crucial for both academic research and managerial practice: POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986), employee well-being (Danna & Griffin, 1999), and adaptive performance (Pulakos et al., 2000). This section reviews the corpus of research on these notions, examines their interconnection, and provides a conceptual framework based on established theoretical perspectives by implying employee well-being as a mediator in the relationship between POS and adaptive performance.

ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE

In the context of rapid technological advancements, heightened global competition, and shifting customer demands, the ability of employees to adapt has emerged as a crucial factor in determining organizational effectiveness (Geldenhuis et al., 2021; Holbeche, 2019). Adaptive performance, a key dimension of job performance (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012; Pulakos et al., 2000), refers to an employee's capacity to modify their behaviour, mindset, and skill set in response to changing work demands (Pulakos et al., 2000). Moreover, it also encompasses acquiring new skills, navigating unfamiliar team dynamics, managing unpredictable situations, and embracing both technological and procedural innovations (Hashim, 2021; Li et al., 2025). Adaptability transcends mere coping with change; it involves proactive engagement in learning and growth, contributing to a dynamic, resilient, and innovative workforce (Hassian et al., 2022). Thus, this competency is crucial in the public sector, as bureaucratic intricacies, legislative developments, and digital transformation continually compel civil servants to enhance their abilities and implement innovative approaches in their line of work (Hashim, 2021).

PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Perceived organizational support refers to the belief held by employees that the organization values their contributions and genuinely cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Numerous empirical studies have identified key antecedents of POS, including fair treatment, supervisory support, access to resources, and opportunities for participative decision-making (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Stinglhamber & Caesens, 2020). Rooted in Organizational Support Theory, POS is a critical psychological mechanism that influences how employees interpret their organization's commitment to them (Stinglhamber & Caesens, 2020). This theory also draws upon the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that when employees feel supported, they are likely to reciprocate with positive work behaviours, including enhanced performance, organizational citizenship behaviours, and reduced turnover intentions (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Furthermore, POS enhances affective commitment—that is, employees' emotional attachment to the organization—which in turn strengthens organizational loyalty (Allen & Meyer, 1996). In this regard, recognition of the importance of POS in the public sector is growing, as it has been linked to lower levels of burnout and disengagement as well as positive association with public service motivation and citizen-oriented behaviour, particularly in Asian contexts such as Malaysia (Ahmad, Ismail, & Sham, 2020; Hasan et al., 2023). Therefore, in demanding work surroundings, POS serves as a psychological resource that mitigates stress and enhances engagement (Prysmakova & Lallatin, 2023).

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Employee well-being pertains to an individual's contentment in the workplace, covering physical, psychological, social, workplace, and subjective well-being (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Pradhan & Hati, 2022). It is increasingly recognized as a predictor and an outcome of essential organizational behaviours. Personnel possessing a high level of well-being tend to exhibit greater resilience, innovative thinking, advanced problem-solving capabilities, and superior interpersonal skills (Adams, 2019; Putra et al., 2024). Well-being is shaped by factors such as leadership style, job characteristics, work-life balance, and organizational support (Hayakawa, 2025; Inceoglu et al., 2021). However, challenges, including role overload and bureaucratic limits, may threaten well-

being in the public sector, whereas institutional support and meaningful work can bolster resilience and motivation (Kanwal et al., 2020). Accordingly, the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) offers a comprehensive framework for understanding well-being. The model suggests that while job demands, such as heavy workload and emotional labour, may undermine employee well-being, job resources, including autonomy, support, and flexibility, can buffer these negative effects and enhance vitality. Moreover, the Broaden-and-Build Theory (Fredrickson, 2001) emphasizes how positive emotions can foster psychological flexibility and adaptive behaviour over time.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To examine the antecedents of adaptive performance in the public sector, this study draws upon two complementary theoretical perspectives: the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and the Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). These frameworks provide a solid lens for understanding how the workplace environment and individual psychological states influence adaptive behaviour. According to the JD-R model, work settings can be divided into two categories: job demands and resources. Job demands refer to the physical, psychological, or organizational aspects of work that require sustained effort and are associated with physiological or psychological costs (e.g., workload, role ambiguity, policy changes). Conversely, job resources are aspects of the job that help achieve work goals, reduce job demands, or stimulate personal growth, such as autonomy, supervisor support, and learning opportunities (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Therefore, according to the JD-R model, when work resources are sufficient, they can mitigate the negative impacts of high job demands and stimulate motivation, thereby improving the possibility of adaptive behaviours.

Secondly, Fredrickson's (2001) Broaden-and-Build Theory posits that positive emotions broaden individuals' momentary thought-action repertoires, which in turn enable them to build enduring personal resources such as resilience, creativity, and problem-solving ability. In a high-dynamic environment faced by the Malaysian public sector, having positive emotions such as enthusiasm, pride, and optimism helps employees embrace challenges, learn from experience, and adapt effectively to evolving demands. Employees who experience supportive work environments, recognition, and intrinsic motivation are more likely to develop these positive emotions, facilitating cognitive flexibility and exploratory behaviours that are key components of adaptive performance. Therefore, the integration of the JD-R model and Broaden-and-Build Theory offers a dual perspective as it captures both structural characteristics and psychological processes that contribute to adaptive performance in public service contexts. Collectively, these theoretical foundations underscore the importance of organizational support and employee well-being in cultivating performance agility, an ability especially pertinent to Malaysian government agencies operating under rapidly changing conditions.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

POS AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Perceived organizational support is consistently linked to enhanced employee well-being across emotional, psychological, and occupational domains (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS fosters job satisfaction, positive affect, and emotional resilience while mitigating burnout and psychological strain (Hasan et al., 2023; Prysmakova & Lallatin, 2023).

Theoretically, POS satisfies key psychological needs, promoting intrinsic motivation, psychological safety, and work–life balance (Emur & Satrya, 2024; Joo & Lee, 2017). Empirical evidence further shows that employees who perceive strong organizational support report higher motivation, work engagement, and productivity, along with reduced stress and emotional exhaustion (Ramadhani & Mubarak, 2023; Saputra et al., 2023; Stinglhamber & Caesens, 2020). POS also operates both directly and indirectly through engagement, commitment, and reduced dehumanization, enhancing overall well-being (Caesens et al., 2017; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Thus, organizations that demonstrate care and support for their employees cultivate a more satisfied, engaged, and psychologically healthy workforce. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: POS is positively related to employee well-being.

POS AND ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE

Organizational Support Theory posits that employees form beliefs about the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Altınöz et al., 2016; Shanock et al., 2019). These perceptions significantly shape attitudes, behaviours, and job performance (Luo, 2020). Employees who perceive high levels of organizational support report greater job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, and increased discretionary effort. POS is conveyed through practices such as fair treatment, access to resources, developmental opportunities, and supportive leadership (Jia-Jun & Hua-Ming, 2022; Le-Hoang Long et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023). In turn, employees reciprocate with positive behaviours, including greater effort, lower absenteeism, and enhanced adaptability. Amid digital transformation and policy reforms, adaptive performance has become essential in the public sector, and POS plays a critical role in enabling this competence. Rooted in Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), POS fosters beneficial reciprocal behaviours to the organization, such as adapting to new roles and challenges. Additionally, research shows that POS enhances psychological empowerment, learning orientation, emotional resilience, and proactive behaviour, all of which are core elements of adaptive performance (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012; Emur & Satrya, 2024; Karnsomdee & Nakmanee, 2025). Within this context, supportive organizational environments thus encourage experimentation, learning, and agility, which are vital for navigating uncertainty and driving performance in dynamic contexts. Thus, it is evident that the construct of POS is significantly associated with adaptive performance and can be hypothesized as follows:

H2: POS is positively related to adaptive performance.

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE

Employee well-being is positively associated with key individual and organizational outcomes, including workplace engagement, job satisfaction, employee retention, sense of purpose, and affective well-being (Nielsen et al., 2017; Taris et al., 2021). Defined across psychological, emotional, and social dimensions, well-being is increasingly recognized as a critical enabler of adaptive performance, the capacity to adjust to change, manage stress, and acquire new skills (Park & Park, 2019; Pulakos et al., 2000). According to the JD-R model, well-being enables employees to access personal resources essential for optimal functioning (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Rahim

et al., 2024). The Broaden-and-Build Theory further posits that positive emotional states enhance cognitive flexibility, learning, and resilience, traits central to adaptive performance (Fredrickson, 2001). In addition, empirical research also supports these theoretical linkages. For instance, the study by Tang et al. (2024) revealed a complex and nuanced link between positive psychology and adaptive performance, with most evidence to date indicating that the components of positive psychology enhance employees' adaptive performance. Meanwhile, Parent-Lamarche et al. (2021) demonstrated that well-being mediates the relationship between organizational resources and performance in complex environments. Although direct investigations into well-being and adaptive performance are still emerging, evidence suggests that individuals with higher well-being tend to be more resilient as well as acquire improved decision-making ability and enhanced efficiency (Jnaneswar & Sulphey, 2021; Khoreva & Wechtler, 2018; Sears et al., 2013). Furthermore, personality traits linked to well-being, such as emotional stability and ambition, predict adaptive behaviours (Huang et al., 2014). Consistent with this, Malaysian evidence shows that workplace stressors can hinder adaptation (Sumri & Mokhtar, 2023). In their study, it was found that emotional exhaustion undermines employees' capacity to adapt, highlighting employee well-being as a key mediating mechanism in the POS–adaptive performance relationship. Accordingly, fostering employee well-being provides a strategic foundation for cultivating adaptive performance in dynamic, high-change settings. Hence, based on this discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Employee well-being is positively related to adaptive performance.

POS, EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING, AND ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE: THE MEDIATION RELATIONSHIP

Employee well-being, conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing psychological, physical, and social domains, plays a critical role in shaping attitudes, behaviours, and work performance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). In this regard, emerging evidence also suggested that well-being serves as a key mediating mechanism linking POS to job performance (Ilyas et al., 2023; Yahya & Md Hatta, 2025). By satisfying employees' psychological needs for belonging, competence, and security, POS enables adaptive cognitive and emotional functioning (David et al., 2024; Kuang et al., 2023). Emur and Satrya (2024) further demonstrated that POS fosters positive affect and psychological capital, thereby promoting adaptive and extra-role performance. From the JD-R perspective, POS functions as a job resource that buffers job demands and fuels motivational processes such as engagement and well-being. Similarly, the Broaden-and-Build Theory posits that positive emotions generated by high well-being expand personal resources, enhancing flexibility, creativity, and resilience—core capabilities for navigating dynamic work environments (Fredrickson, 2001). This mediating role is particularly salient in the public sector, where structural rigidity and political constraints often limit direct performance gains. Giauque et al. (2013) found that Swiss public servants who perceived high organizational support reported greater well-being, which subsequently increased their adaptability and openness to reform. Therefore, while POS may directly influence performance, its effect is amplified when mediated through employee well-being (David et al., 2024; Kuang et al., 2023). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Employee well-being mediates the relationship between POS and adaptive performance.

INTEGRATED RELATIONSHIPS

Given the interdependence of POS, well-being, and adaptive performance, this study proposes that these constructs are significantly interrelated, forming a coherent framework for understanding performance agility in public sector organizations. The above relationship is shown in the following hypothesis:

H5: POS, employee well-being, and adaptive performance are significantly interrelated.

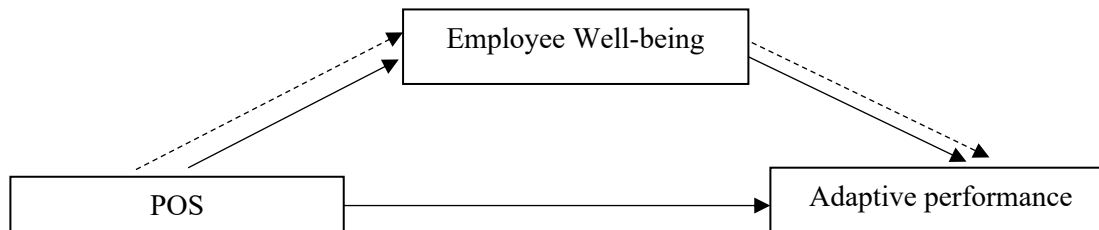


FIGURE 1. Research model (dashed arrows indicate indirect relationships, and solid arrows indicate direct relationships)

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLING

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design, allowing data to be collected from multiple organizational contexts at a single point in time (Taris et al., 2021). The target population consisted of government employees from various ministries and departments across Malaysia. Given the large and heterogeneous nature of this population, this study adopts a census approach because the Malaysian public service constitutes a finite, well-documented population of 1.26 million Malaysian civil servants, excluding police and army (Firdaus Ismail, 2024). In this regard, previous academic research has effectively employed the census method in gathering data from every unit within a defined population in pursuit of achieving complete coverage and eliminating sampling bias (Morgan et al., 2018; Ngangi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, while a census removes sampling error, researchers must still account for coverage, non-response, and measurement errors (Altekhaifi et al., 2020; Manaf et al., 2022). Thus, enumerating all Malaysian public servants yields true population parameters, thereby increasing the precision of the results. Subsequently, the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator was utilized to determine the minimum required sample size. Based on the estimated population, with a 5% margin of error and a 99% confidence level, the recommended sample size was 664 respondents.

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire survey incorporating established psychometric properties to measure POS, employee well-being, and adaptive performance. In this respect, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of 48 civil servants working at Jabatan Perdana Menteri, Kementerian Kewangan, and Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia to assess the clarity, readability, and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire. Revisions were made based on

participants' feedback before the main data collection. Thereafter, the revised questionnaires were disseminated to all Malaysian ministries and agencies, excluding the three agencies included in the pilot study, through designated officials from the Management Services Departments. A total of 773 responses were collected, of which 40 were excluded due to incompleteness, yielding a final sample of 733 valid responses for analysis. Once data was gathered, screening procedures were implemented to identify and address issues related to missing data, outliers, and response biases. Depending on the extent and pattern of missing data, appropriate treatments such as listwise deletion, mean imputation, or maximum likelihood estimation were considered. Descriptive statistics were then calculated to summarize demographic characteristics and key variables. Data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which was also used for reliability analysis and preliminary statistical testing. Regression analysis was conducted afterwards to examine the strength and significance of relationships among the study variables (Saputra et al., 2020). Both descriptive (means, standard deviations, frequencies) and inferential statistical methods were applied to analyze the data and test the study's hypotheses. Finally, mediation analysis was conducted following the procedures outlined by Abu-Bader and Jones (2021).

MEASUREMENT SCALES

In this study, POS was conceptualized as the independent variable, adaptive performance as the dependent variable, and employee well-being as the mediating variable. The final instrument consisted of 57 items, each assessed using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). Originally developed in English, the questionnaire was translated into Malay to enhance comprehension and cultural relevance for Malaysian respondents. A rigorous translation and back-translation process was employed to ensure semantic equivalence between the two language versions. Revisions based on pilot study feedback further improved item clarity and contextual appropriateness. Additionally, to increase data accuracy and respondent reliability, the questionnaire included clear instructions and definitions of key concepts, following best practices in instrument design (Boateng, 2018). The instrument was structured into four main sections: (1) demographic information, (2) POS, (3) employee well-being, and (4) adaptive performance. POS was measured using eight items adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1997), with a Cronbach alpha of .90. Sample items include "My organization really cares about my well-being" and "My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favour." Adaptive performance was assessed using 19 items from the scale developed by Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012), yielding a Cronbach's alpha of .95. One item, "I do not hesitate to go against established ideas and propose an innovative solution," was excluded based on pilot study feedback for clarity and contextual relevance. Example items include "I easily reorganize my work to adapt to new circumstances" and "I look for every opportunity that enables me to improve my performance." Employee well-being was measured using 31 items from Pradhan and Hati's (2022) multidimensional scale, covering four dimensions of well-being (Cronbach's alpha = .916). Sample items include "I care for things that are important to me, not what is important to others," "I enjoy meaningful work," and "I feel good about myself."

Reliability for all measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in an overall value of $\alpha = .818$, demonstrating a strong reliability value for internal consistency (Hashim & Ahmad, 2020). Thereupon, the alpha coefficient acquired in this study advocates that the items adapted effectively measure the key constructs of interest. This level of reliability enhances the

credibility of the data and affirms the appropriateness of the measurement instrument for empirical analysis. Furthermore, each question in the instrument was clearly articulated, allowing respondents to comprehend easily, thus facilitating thoughtful and informed responses. In addition, all ethical protocols were strictly followed: data were collected solely for academic purposes, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process (Jeanes, 2017).

DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic details of this study are summarized in TABLE 1. The TABLE shows that the proportion of male respondents is double that of female respondents, with males making up 68% and females accounting for 32%. Regarding age distribution, respondents were categorized as follows: 7% were 18-27 years old, 58% were 28-43 years old, and 35% were 44-59 years old. Regarding education levels, the majority of the sample held a PMR/SPM level certificate (50.3%), followed by those with a diploma (23%), a bachelor's degree (17.5%), a master's degree (8.2%), and a doctoral degree (1%). When considering work experience, approximately 18.4% of respondents reported less than six years of experience, 13.7% had 7 to 10 years of experience, 19.5% worked for 11 to 15 years, and 48.4% had over 16 years of work experience. Additionally, 76% of respondents were part of the support group, while 24% belonged to the management and professional group. In terms of their work location, 93% were public servants at the federal level, and 7% worked at the state level.

TABLE 1. Demographic Profile

Demographics	N	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	498	68
Female	235	32
Total	733	100.0
Age		
18-27	51	7
28-43	425	58
44-59	257	35
Total	733	100.0
Education		
PMR/SPM level	369	50.3
Diploma	169	23
Bachelor's degree	128	17.5
Master's degree	60	8.2
Doctoral degree	7	1
Total	733	100.0
Work experience		
Less than six years	135	18.4
7 to 10 years	100	13.7
11 to 15 years	143	19.5
More than 16 years	355	48.4
Total	733	100.0
Service group		
Support	557	76
Management and professional	176	24
Total	733	100.0

Demographics	N	Percentage (%)
Designation level		
Federal	682	93
State	51	7
Total	733	100.0

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research employs a quantitative methodology utilizing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyze the relationships between POS, employee well-being, and adaptive performance among Malaysian government servants. This approach allows for the simultaneous examination of multiple relationships and the assessment of mediation effects (Rosafizah et al., 2020). In this respect, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to obtain an initial picture of the levels of the variables studied, namely adaptive performance (AP), employee well-being (EW), and POS. The findings showed that the mean for adaptive performance was 5.6418 (SP = 0.91511), indicating that the average level of adaptive performance among respondents was at a high level (based on a scale of 1 to 7). This suggests that, in general, government employees in this study demonstrated the ability to adapt to change, flexibility in performing tasks, and effectiveness in responding to challenging work situations. Meanwhile, the average for employee well-being was 5.2992 (SP = 0.63596), which also indicated a relatively high level of well-being among respondents, implying that psychologically, emotionally, and socially, employees were in a sTABLE and healthy state. This result proves that the government servants have the potential to contribute positively to work productivity and social relationships in the workplace. For POS, the mean value was 5.1187 (SP = 1.00582), which reveals that respondents generally felt that their organization provided good support, whether in terms of guidance, appreciation, or recognition of their contributions. With a sample size of $n = 733$ for each variable, these findings, as shown in TABLE 2, illustrate that the levels of all three variables are sTABLE and reflect positive patterns in the public sector organizations studied.

TABLE 2: Descriptive analysis

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PMean	5.6418	.91511	733
EWMean	5.2992	.63596	733
POSMean	5.1187	1.00582	733

Subsequently, the results of multiple linear regression analysis involving two independent variables, namely perception of organizational support and employee well-being (EW) on adaptive performance (AP), prove that this model is significant and has high explanatory power. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) value is 0.740, showing a strong relationship between the combination of independent variables and the dependent variable. The value of R Square (R^2) = 0.547, implying that 54.7% of the variance in adaptive performance can be explained jointly by perception of organizational support and employee well-being. The value further indicates that this model has strong explanatory power in explaining the factors influencing adaptive performance among government employees studied.

Moreover, the Adjusted $R^2 = 0.546$ value proves that the model remains sTABLE and not too biased even when considering the number of variables in the model, confirming the model's validity in a more general population. The statistical test $F(2, 730) = 441.381$, $p < 0.001$, shows

that this regression model is statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. In other words, at least one of the independent variables contributes significantly to the variance in the dependent variable. Finally, the Durbin-Watson value = 1.868 is within the acceptable range (1.5 – 2.5), indicating that there is no autocorrelation issue in the regression residuals, thus further strengthening the reliability of this model. The summary of these findings is in TABLE 3.

TABLE 3. Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
						F	df1	df2		
1.	.740 ^a	.547	.546	.61652	.547	441.381	2	730	< .001	1.868

a. Predictors: (Constant), POSMEAN, EWMEAN

b. Dependent Variable: APMEAN

ANOVA results ($F = 441.381$, $df = 2,730$, $p < 0.001$) in TABLE 4 show that the combined predictors—perceived organizational support (POS) and employee well-being—explain a substantial proportion of variance in adaptive performance ($R^2 = 0.547$), confirming the regression model's strong and statistically significant fit.

TABLE 4. ANOVA^a test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	335.531	2	167.765	441.381	< .001 ^b
	Residual	277.467	730	.380		
	Total	612.998	732			

a. Dependent variable: APMEAN

b. Predictors (Constant), POSMEAN, EWMEAN

The coefficient analysis in TABLE 5 further reveals that employee well-being (EWMEAN) serves as the strongest predictor of adaptive performance (APMEAN), demonstrating unstandardized coefficient values of $B = 0.943$ and $Beta = 0.656$, both of which are significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. This indicates that adaptive performance is anticipated to rise by 0.943 units for each one-unit increase in employee well-being. In addition, POS (POSMEAN) also positively impacts adaptive performance ($B = 0.119$, $Beta = 0.131$, $p < 0.001$), albeit with a weaker influence compared to employee well-being. The standardized coefficient value (Beta) facilitates a comparison of the relative strength of these variables, and the higher Beta for employee well-being underscores its more significant role in shaping adaptive performance compared to organizational support.

TABLE 5. Coefficients

Variables	B (Unstd.)	Std. Error	Beta (Std.)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.033	0.191	—	0.171	0.864
Employee Wellbeing (EW)	0.943	0.044	0.656	21.359	0.000
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	0.119	0.028	0.131	4.267	0.000

TABLE 6. Regression analysis

Test Model	R ²	F	Sig.
POS → AP	0.264	262.862	.000
POS → EW	0.342	379.711	.000
EW → AP	0.536	844.681	.000
POS + EW → AP	0.547	441.381	.000

Lastly, regression analysis in TABLE 6 revealed that POS had a significant direct effect on adaptive performance (AP) with $R^2 = 0.264$, $p < 0.001$ (Step 1). Furthermore, POS also has a substantial impact on employee well-being (EW), $R^2 = 0.342$, $p < 0.001$ (Step 2). The results also illustrate that employee well-being (EW) has a positive and significant relationship with adaptive performance (AP). The correlation coefficient (R) value is 0.732, and R Square = 0.536 (Step 3), indicating that 53.6% of the variance in adaptive performance can be explained by employee well-being. The model is statistically significant, $F(1, 731) = 844.681$, $p < 0.001$, and the Durbin-Watson value = 1.853, indicating no autocorrelation issue. When both POS (POSMEAN) and employee well-being (EWMEAN) were simultaneously entered into the regression model predicting adaptive performance (AP), the explained variance increased to $R^2 = .547$, with both predictors remaining statistically significant (Step 4). This pattern of results indicates that employee well-being functions as a partial mediator in the relationship between POS and adaptive performance, as the effect of POS remained significant even after controlling for EW.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to examine the direct impact of POS on adaptive performance and the mediating role of employee well-being. As one of the earliest studies to explore these relationships among Malaysian government servants, it offers meaningful insights grounded in a synthesized model framework. First, findings confirmed a significant direct relationship between POS and adaptive performance, supporting Hypothesis H1. POS also significantly influenced employee well-being, aligning with Hypothesis H2 and prior research (Caesens et al., 2017; Eisenberger et al., 2020; Ramadhani & Mubarak, 2023). Further analysis supported Hypothesis H3, revealing a significant relationship between employee well-being and adaptive performance. Multiple linear regression results demonstrated that employee well-being partially mediates the POS-adaptive performance link, and the direct effect of POS on adaptive performance decreased with the inclusion of employee well-being, supporting Hypotheses H4 and H5.

Consequently, these findings emphasize the pivotal role of POS in enhancing employee well-being. When employees feel supported, it not only makes them happier but also helps them perform better. According to Organizational Support Theory, posited by Eisenberger et al. (2020), when workplaces create a nurturing environment, it meets employees' emotional and social needs. This support leads to greater psychological well-being, which in turn enhances their overall performance, especially adaptive performance. In this matter, employee well-being is a psychological mechanism enabling adaptive behaviour. This is supported by research suggesting that well-being enhances emotional resilience, cognitive flexibility, and motivation to cope with change (Klein et al., 2023; Twiselton et al., 2020), qualities essential for responding effectively to novel and unpredictable workplace challenges (Beshai et al., 2018). Theoretical implications suggest that organizational practices promoting adaptability prioritize a supportive climate. Practically, public institutions should embed well-being strategies into HR and leadership

programs to better manage dynamic demands. The regression analysis indicated that employee well-being is the strongest predictor of adaptive performance ($B = 0.943$, $\beta = 0.656$, $p < .001$). The results highlight just how important psychological resources are in helping people develop positive behaviours (Beshai et al., 2018; Mehmood, 2022; Pagán-Castaño et al., 2020). This shows that taking care of employee well-being is not just the right thing to do; it is also a strategic move that can boost flexibility and overall performance in the public sector. By investing in the well-being of their employees, organizations can create a more resilient and effective work environment.

Based on the results, it is recommended that the Malaysian government develop policies targeting both physical and psychosocial work environments to promote workforce well-being across sectors. From the perspective of the Broaden-and-Build Theory, positive emotions help develop psychological resources, improving both well-being and performance. Understanding employee well-being as a mediator between POS and adaptive performance offers valuable insights. For researchers, it suggests further investigation into contextual and longitudinal dynamics. For practitioners, it emphasizes the importance of cultivating supportive work environments and implementing well-being initiatives to foster adaptability and organizational effectiveness.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

With the intention of warranting results that represent the larger population, a sufficiently large sample was collected with the aim of achieving a 99% confidence level. However, a closer analysis of the demographic data revealed a concentration of respondents from the administrative and enforcement sectors. Consequently, to ensure generalizability, future research should include participants from other public service domains, such as education and healthcare. Furthermore, this study's singular emphasis is on the public sector. For that reason, it is advisable for further research to explore equivalent interactions in other sectors, including banking, manufacturing, or transportation, to enhance the validation and refinement of the theoretical model. Expanding the sample to diverse organizational contexts will help determine whether the observed findings are broadly applicable or require sector-specific adaptations. Aside from that, POS remains a fundamental concept in organizational behaviour, with important implications for both employee well-being and organizational outcomes. In the context of public sector transformation, POS provides a critical lens for understanding how supportive environments foster adaptability, commitment, and high performance. Researchers are therefore encouraged to explore the moderating effect of other variables, such as organizational culture, high-performance work systems, and digital readiness, in the relationship between POS and adaptive performance.

Therefore, employee well-being is vital not only for individual flourishing but also for long-term organizational sustainability. As public sector organizations continue to evolve, promoting well-being is both an ethical imperative and a strategic priority. Therefore, future research could examine the interplay between HR practices, performance, and well-being (Pagán-Castaño et al., 2020), the predictors of well-being in non-Western or culturally unique contexts (Gorgenyi-Hegyes et al., 2021; Magnier-Watanabe et al., 2023), and the combined influence of factors such as workplace spirituality, mindfulness, and self-compassion on employee well-being (Jnaneswar & Sulphay, 2021).

Moreover, enhancing theoretical development and supporting evidence-based management techniques could be done by looking at these interactions in many cultural and organizational environments. Lastly, future research may also consider extending the current framework by integrating additional performance-based theories.

CONCLUSION

This study's empirical model builds upon established theoretical foundations, particularly the JD-R model and the broaden-and-build theory. Grounded on these theories, this study proposed and confirmed a model demonstrating the interconnectedness of POS, employee well-being, and adaptive performance within the Malaysian public service. In addition, POS also operates as a key organizational resource that fosters well-being, eventually enhancing adaptive capabilities. In this respect, the empirical findings confirm that employee well-being significantly mediates the POS-adaptive performance relationships. Our results underscore that employee well-being not only enhances individual satisfaction but also drives adaptive capabilities. Notably, the indirect effect through employee well-being exceeds the direct influence of POS alone, underscoring the pivotal role of employee well-being in nurturing adaptability. These results highlight that investments in employee well-being initiatives not only elevate satisfaction and psychological health but also translate into greater adaptive capacity and performance. Such outcomes emerge from a reciprocal process. When employees perceive positive support from their organization, they feel valued and supported, and ultimately, employees will be more inclined to adjust effectively to evolving organizational demands.

In a nutshell, by articulating this mechanism, the study deepens theoretical understanding of how a supportive work environment can build the personal resources needed for adaptive performance. Practically, it provides leaders, especially in public sectors, with evidence that prioritizing well-being is a strategic pathway to enhancing organizational agility and operational effectiveness. This research provides a robust empirical framework that highlights the crucial role of employee well-being as a conduit through which perceived organizational support translates into tangible improvements in adaptive performance. Ultimately, this study offers a compelling case for public sector organizations to prioritize well-being initiatives as a strategic lever for improving operational effectiveness and fostering a more adaptable workforce, as well as a foundation for future interventions and research aimed at strengthening adaptive performance through employee well-being.

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