

Work Engagement among Baristas in Franchise and Non-Franchise Coffee Shops: A Qualitative Study Based on the Job Demands–Resources Framework

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ABSTRACT

Abstract. This study explores work engagement among baristas in franchise and non-franchise coffee shops using a qualitative case study approach grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework. The research aims to understand how job resources and organizational context shape employee engagement in service-based work environments. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and observations involving baristas with operational and supervisory experience. Thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns of meaning related to work engagement. The findings reveal that work engagement is strongly driven by the availability and quality of job resources, particularly social support, autonomy, feedback, and opportunities for skill development. A key insight is that franchise coffee shops tend to strengthen engagement through structural clarity, standardized procedures, and predictable reward systems, which reduce role ambiguity and increase psychological security. In contrast, non-franchise coffee shops enhance engagement through greater autonomy, informal learning opportunities, and closer relational ties with owners, although this is accompanied by variability in role clarity and organizational consistency. Leadership quality emerges as a central mechanism that determines whether structural rigidity or flexibility translates into positive engagement outcomes. Supportive and transformational leadership strengthens meaning-making and emotional attachment to work across both organizational types. These findings indicate that work engagement in barista work is not merely a function of individual motivation but is shaped by the interaction between organizational structure and psychosocial work conditions. The study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how different business models in the coffee shop industry produce distinct engagement dynamics through varying configurations of job resources and leadership practices. Practical implications suggest that balancing structure and flexibility is critical to sustaining employee engagement in service-oriented workplaces.

Keywords: *Work engagement, Barista, Franchise coffee shop, Non-franchise coffee shop, Job Demands-Resources model.*

1. INTRODUCTION

After the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia has experienced significant recovery and rapid growth in the business sector, particularly in the coffee industry. Indonesia remained the third-largest coffee-producing country in the world in 2022/2023 (Databoks, 2023). The growth of coffee shop businesses in the Food and Beverage (F&B) sector is reflected in the increasing coffee consumption, which reached 5,000 bags of 60 kg in 2020 (Dataindonesia.id, 2022). This growth is particularly evident in East Java, with Surabaya being one of the cities with the highest growth in coffee shop businesses (Badan Pusat Statistik Jawa Timur, 2021). The development of the coffee shop industry does not only indicate changes in consumption patterns, but also reflects the emergence of a service-based work environment that relies heavily on employee performance, interpersonal interaction, and customer experience.

Along with this development, the demand for high-quality human resources has also increased. According to Yuniantari (2021), the quality of human resources determines organizational success. However, employee loyalty and engagement remain significant challenges. Schaufeli et al. (2006) stated that employees with higher work engagement tend to be more committed and productive. Furthermore, Kahn (1990) emphasized that engagement involves both psychological and physical presence in organizational roles. In the context of industrial and organizational psychology, work engagement is commonly understood as a positive psychological condition characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in work. Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, dedication reflects a strong sense of involvement, enthusiasm, and significance, while absorption refers to being fully concentrated and immersed in work activities (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Work engagement can also be understood through the Job Demands–Resources perspective, which explains that employees' engagement is shaped by the balance between job demands and job resources. Job demands may include workload, emotional demands, work pressure, and customer-facing responsibilities, while job resources may include salary, support from supervisors, organizational clarity, career opportunities, and a positive work climate (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In service-based occupations such as baristas, these factors are important because employees are required not only to complete technical tasks, but also to maintain social interaction, emotional regulation, and service quality.

The role of baristas has become increasingly important with the growth of coffee shop businesses. Baristas are not only responsible for preparing beverages but also for serving customers and interacting directly with them, making them representatives of the brand and key contributors to customer experience. This study examines the differences in work engagement among baristas in franchise and non-franchise coffee shops. Franchise coffee shops are generally more stable, with structured systems and standardized operating procedures (SOPs) across all branches. In contrast, non-franchise coffee shops tend to have more varied standards and are often still developing their business identity.

These differences are also reflected in salary standards and organizational culture. According to Muda et al. (2014), employee performance is influenced by factors such as salary, work environment, organizational culture, and motivation. A comparable example can be found in the difference between civil servant teachers and non-permanent teachers, where similar job responsibilities may result in different benefits and levels of compensation (Ufaira et al., 2021). Therefore, different organizational systems between franchise and non-franchise coffee shops may create different work experiences for baristas, particularly in terms of perceived stability, clarity of job roles, compensation, work culture, and opportunities for growth. These differences may influence how baristas experience meaning, comfort, motivation, and attachment to their work.

Although work engagement has been widely discussed in industrial and organizational psychology, studies focusing specifically on baristas as service workers in the coffee shop industry remain limited. Previous studies tend to discuss employee engagement in formal organizations, corporate settings, or general service industries, while fewer studies have explored how baristas interpret their work engagement in relation to the type of coffee shop business in which they work. In addition, the comparison between franchise and non-franchise

coffee shops has not been sufficiently examined from the perspective of baristas' subjective work experiences. This creates a research gap, especially in understanding how organizational structure, compensation, work culture, and career expectations shape baristas' engagement in their daily work.

This study aims to explore the level of work engagement among baristas in two different types of coffee shops, namely franchise and non-franchise establishments. It also seeks to identify the factors influencing baristas' decisions when choosing to work in a particular type of coffee shop business. More specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How do baristas in franchise and non-franchise coffee shops experience work engagement? (2) What factors influence baristas' work engagement in each type of coffee shop? and (3) How do baristas interpret their reasons for choosing to work in franchise or non-franchise coffee shops?

This research is expected to provide valuable insights for coffee shop owners and management in developing their businesses. Additionally, it aims to offer new perspectives in designing organizational strategies and human resource selection that support business growth and the broader Indonesian economy. From an academic perspective, this study seeks to enrich the literature in industrial and organizational psychology, particularly through a qualitative approach. Furthermore, it is expected to serve as a reference for future research with similar subjects or settings. By examining baristas' work engagement through a qualitative approach, this study is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of employee engagement in the growing coffee shop industry, particularly in the context of franchise and non-franchise business models.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research method with a case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, focusing on a single unit of analysis, namely employees/baristas from two coffee shops with different business models. The primary participants are baristas at the managerial level from both franchise and non-franchise coffee shops, with two participants representing each type.

Data collection methods include observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews. Data analysis is conducted using thematic analysis to identify key themes emerging from the research data. Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher carried out observations using a behavioral checklist based on the dimensions of work engagement.

Participant Characteristics and Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with a comparative case study approach. A qualitative approach was selected because this study aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of baristas' work engagement based on their subjective experiences, perceptions, and meanings in the workplace. Qualitative research is appropriate for exploring how individuals interpret and give meaning to their lived experiences within a particular social context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study approach was used because the phenomenon was examined within a specific real-life context, namely coffee shop work settings with different business models. A case study design allows researchers to investigate a

contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world setting, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly separated (Yin, 2018).

The unit of analysis in this study was the work engagement experience of baristas working in two types of coffee shops: franchise and non-franchise coffee shops. The participants were four baristas with supervisory or managerial responsibilities, consisting of two participants from a franchise coffee shop and two participants from a non-franchise coffee shop. The participants were selected because they were considered to have sufficient experience and knowledge regarding daily work processes, employee roles, work culture, and organizational practices in their respective coffee shops.

The inclusion criteria for participants were: (1) currently working as a barista or barista with managerial/supervisory responsibilities; (2) working in either a franchise or non-franchise coffee shop; (3) having direct experience in coffee preparation, customer service, and daily operational activities; (4) being willing to participate in the study voluntarily; and (5) having worked for at least one year in the current coffee shop. Participants who were not directly involved in barista duties, were temporary workers with very limited work experience, or were unwilling to provide consent were excluded from the study.

Sampling Procedures

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. This technique was used because the study required participants who had specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives, namely baristas who worked in different types of coffee shop business models and had sufficient knowledge of their workplace conditions. Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to select information-rich participants who can provide relevant and in-depth data about the phenomenon being studied (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). The selection of participants was based on their role, work experience, and ability to provide information related to work engagement, organizational culture, salary standards, work environment, and reasons for choosing a particular type of coffee shop.

Data collection was conducted in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia, specifically in one franchise coffee shop and one non-franchise coffee shop. Prior to data collection, the researcher explained the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and confidentiality of the study to all participants. Participation was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interview process began. No personal identifiers were used in the report, and participant identities were anonymized using codes such as P1, P2, P3, and P4.

The study followed ethical principles applicable to qualitative research, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and the protection of participants from potential harm. These procedures are in line with qualitative reporting standards that emphasize transparency in participant selection, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and contextual information (Levitt et al., 2018). No financial compensation was provided to participants. This study followed institutional ethical research guidelines.

Sample Size, Power, and Precision

The intended and actual sample size in this study was four participants, consisting of two baristas from a franchise coffee shop and two baristas from a non-franchise coffee shop. In qualitative research, sample size is not determined through statistical power analysis because the aim is not to generalize findings statistically, but to obtain rich, detailed, and meaningful data related to the phenomenon under study. Sample size in qualitative studies is generally determined based on the depth, richness, and relevance of the data rather than statistical representativeness (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vasileiou et al., 2018). Therefore, the sample size was determined based on the focus of the study, the depth of the information obtained from participants, and the suitability of participants with the research objectives.

Although the number of participants was limited, the selected participants were considered relevant because they represented two different coffee shop business models and had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied. The use of in-depth semi-structured interviews and observation was expected to provide detailed data regarding the participants' work engagement experiences. The limited number of participants is acceptable in a qualitative case study when the emphasis is placed on contextual understanding and information-rich cases rather than broad population generalization (Yin, 2018).

Research Instruments and Materials

The instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide. The semi-structured interview guide was developed by the researcher to explore participants' experiences of work engagement in franchise and non-franchise coffee shop settings. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate in qualitative research because they provide flexibility for researchers to explore participants' experiences while maintaining focus on the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interview questions focused on several main areas, including participants' daily work experiences, perceptions of their work environment, salary and compensation, organizational culture, work motivation, career expectations, and reasons for choosing to work in a particular type of coffee shop. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses, while still maintaining consistency with the research objectives.

The materials used in this study included an interview guide, field notes, and an audio recording device. Audio recordings were made only after obtaining participants' consent. Field notes were used to record contextual information, non-verbal expressions, and relevant observations during the data collection process. The use of field notes is important in qualitative research because it helps document contextual details and researcher reflections that may support data interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interview data were then used to explore the meanings, experiences, and explanations behind the observed behaviors. The use of more than one data collection method can strengthen the credibility of qualitative findings through triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was selected because it allows researchers to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a flexible method for analyzing qualitative data and is widely used in psychology to identify patterns of meaning across a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process followed several stages. First, the researcher familiarized themselves with the

data by reading interview transcripts and field notes repeatedly. Second, initial codes were generated based on important statements related to work engagement, work environment, organizational culture, salary, motivation, and reasons for choosing a workplace. Third, codes with similar meanings were grouped into potential themes. Fourth, the researcher reviewed the themes to ensure that they were relevant to the data and the research questions. Fifth, each theme was defined and named. Finally, the themes were interpreted and presented in relation to the research objectives and theoretical concepts of work engagement.

The analysis was conducted manually. To maintain the credibility of the findings, the researcher compared data from observations and interviews. This comparison was conducted to ensure consistency between participants' verbal explanations and observed workplace behaviors. The researcher also used direct quotations from participants to support the interpretation of each theme. Reflexive notes were maintained during the analysis process to reduce researcher bias and to document analytical decisions. Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are important criteria for evaluating trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the thematic analysis, the findings of this study are organized into four main themes: (1) learning opportunities and job resources as sources of work engagement, (2) appreciation, respect, and emotional challenges in the workplace, (3) supportive leadership and the meaning of work, and (4) differences in work engagement between franchise and non-franchise coffee shops. These themes reflect how baristas experience, interpret, and maintain their work engagement in different organizational contexts.

Theme 1: Learning Opportunities and Job Resources as Sources of Work Engagement

Burr et al. (2019) and Tabak and Hendy (2016) found that job resources such as social support, autonomy, and feedback are positively associated with work engagement. These resources help employees find meaning in their work, which in turn enhances their intention to remain with the organization and increases their level of engagement. Based on the interview results, Participant "I" revealed that one of the factors that keeps them motivated at work is the opportunity to learn many things, not only about being a barista, but also about management, inventory, cashier duties, and other related tasks.

"I always feel motivated here because I can learn a lot. As a barista, I'm not just learning about making coffee, but also other things. For example, if there's a broken machine or an electrical issue in the store, I get to learn how to fix it, like a technician, and solve problems if they happen again in the future. That's something I really enjoy, and it's one of the reasons I've stayed for a long time, because I'm not only learning about being a barista behind the bar, but also about management, inventory, cashier duties, and more."

Participant "I" also emphasized the importance of communication and support from the team and supervisors, who are open in providing opportunities and resources to learn and improve skills.

“Because I have personal goals, I feel that here I can learn many things, not only about coffee, but also about management. I am given the facilities and opportunities to learn, and communication is very open, from supervisors to staff. For example, during the COVID period, the managers really stepped in directly, and I saw how they worked hard to sustain the business. It made me start thinking about how I could contribute as well, like coming up with ideas to attract customers through promotions and initiating delivery services, which we had never done before. It made me feel like I was not just an employee, but that this was also my business.”

“Yes, exactly. That’s why I mentioned earlier that the career path here and the opportunities for advancement are quite good.”

The social support from supervisors and the team highlights the importance of job resources in enhancing Participant “I”’s work engagement. Similarly, Participant “A,” in this conversation, demonstrates that social support and a positive work environment significantly influence their level of engagement at work. Participant “A” feels comfortable and motivated due to the support from the café owner, who consistently shows concern for employees’ well-being and fosters a family-like atmosphere. This finding aligns with Burr et al. (2019) and Tabak and Hendy (2016), who state that social support, autonomy, and feedback are positively related to work engagement. For example, when Participant “A” felt supported by the café owner in his initiative to create new menu items and participate in a barista competition, it further enhanced his engagement at work.

“If you compare it, in some coffee shops or cafés, the owners never really pay attention to our condition on the ground. We struggle a lot, but the owners just keep putting pressure on targets, meeting sales goals, cutting costs, and so on. Even a small mistake can lead to a warning. But here, it’s different. I feel more valued because it’s rare to have an owner who actually cares about us, asks how we’re doing, and checks on the employees’ well-being. The atmosphere here feels like a family, it’s really comfortable. Honestly, it’s much better than my previous workplaces.”

Theme 2: Appreciation, Respect, and Emotional Challenges in the Workplace

Research by Dubbelt et al. (2019) and Shin et al. (2019) shows that negative workplace behaviors, such as incivility and a lack of respect, can significantly reduce work engagement. These behaviors create a stressful work environment that drains employees’ emotional resources, making it difficult for them to remain engaged. Participant “I” mentioned that one of the factors that can cause stress is when their work is not appreciated or when they are blamed without receiving any recognition.

“Oh, for me, I’m actually the type of person who, when stressed, tries to ignore it or push it aside. But there are still certain things that can make me stressed, especially problems at work. Strangely, work-related issues stress me more than personal ones. What really brings me down or makes me stressed is when my work is not appreciated. For example, even after I’ve completed everything, I still get blamed, and it feels like nothing is ever enough, with no appreciation at all. I mean, even if there are mistakes, it shouldn’t bring someone down. It would be better to first acknowledge the effort, and then explain what should be improved.”

When there is no appreciation or recognition for their hard work, it can lead to a decline in motivation and work engagement. This is consistent with the findings of Dubbelt et al.

(2019) and Shin et al. (2019) regarding the negative impact of incivility and a lack of respect in the workplace. In addition, Participant “A” also acknowledged that negative behaviors in the workplace can significantly reduce work engagement. He shared his experience in a previous workplace, where the owner paid little attention to employees’ well-being and imposed excessive pressure, making him feel uncomfortable and stressed, as previously described.

Theme 3: Supportive Leadership, Role Clarity, and the Meaning of Work

Furthermore, the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire study highlights that a positive psychosocial work environment, characterized by supportive leadership, clear roles, and manageable workloads, is crucial for maintaining high levels of work engagement (Burr et al., 2019). Participant “I” explained that in their current workplace, they experience a supportive work environment with good leadership. For instance, they feel trusted and involved in decision-making processes within their store.

“Hmm, yes. There was a situation in this store where there was no supervisor or manager, so the highest position here is me. This is one form of trust from the company, and I’m involved in decision-making in the store, not only in the bar area but also in the kitchen. One thing I really like is that I can learn many things. For example, when it comes to fixing lights or machines, at first we would call a technician, but over time I learned how to fix them myself.”

This supportive leadership and clearly defined role create a positive work environment, which in turn enhances Participant “I”’s work engagement. Participant “A” also feels that the current work environment is highly supportive and comfortable, which encourages them to remain motivated and engaged in their job. They describe the café’s work environment as a “second home” and emphasize the importance of open communication and positive relationships with both colleagues and the café owner.

“It really feels like a second home to me, this place where I work. Honestly, it’s hard to describe how I feel because I’m just so comfortable here. Sometimes I even think that when I get married later, I might not be able to hang out and chat with my friends here as often and I know I’ll really miss it. It’s like having uncles and aunts here, like I have younger and older siblings too, some of them can be annoying at times, haha, but there are just so many stories here.”

Research by Kark and Van Dijk (2019) and Shamir et al. (1993) shows that transformational leadership can enhance employee work engagement by focusing them on promotion goals and personal aspirations. Transformational leaders who provide a clear vision, high expectations, and personal support can significantly increase employee motivation and engagement. Participant “I” feels motivated by their manager, who serves as an inspiring figure and role model. The manager has taught them many things, both operational and managerial, while also providing personal support and motivation.

“Yes, there is my former manager. I was able to learn many things from him because he had a wide range of skills. That motivated me to become like him, capable in both operations and management, and eventually, he became my role model.”

This leadership style helps Participant “I” remain engaged and motivated in their work, while also staying focused on their goal of learning more about management and advancing their career path.

“I have a goal of becoming a good leader, and I want to learn more about management. As a barista, I sometimes feel that I’ve learned enough about barista skills, so I want to grow further and learn other areas. Also, I think the career path here is quite promising as long as you put in the effort to improve yourself and set clear targets for your advancement.”

The café owner of Participant “A” also appears to apply a transformational leadership style by providing a clear vision, high expectations, and personal support to employees. Participant “A” experiences this support through effective communication and genuine concern for employees’ well-being, which helps enhance their motivation and work engagement. Participant “A” shared how they were motivated by the owner’s involvement in including them in internal projects. Through this, they felt valued and encouraged to continue learning and developing in their role, as the owner consistently provided both a clear vision and well-defined expectations.

Participant “A” also stated, “A sustainable company, especially during the COVID period. Most baristas usually have their own loyal customers who will follow them wherever they go, and that brings a positive impact to the company. In my opinion, one of the reasons a company can survive is because of employees who are committed to the organization, which starts from providing good service to customers.”

This perspective reflects how employee commitment and a sense of ownership contribute to organizational sustainability. It also aligns with the findings of Kark and Van Dijk (2019), which show that transformational leadership can enhance employee engagement by directing them toward personal aspirations and organizational goals.

Theme 4: Differences in Work Engagement between Franchise and Non-Franchise Coffee Shops

This study also finds that differences in work engagement between baristas in franchise and non-franchise coffee shops can be influenced by several factors.

First, in terms of organizational structure and management: franchise coffee shops generally have a more clearly defined and structured organizational system. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are well-established and consistently implemented across all branches. This provides baristas with clear guidance regarding their roles and responsibilities, which can enhance work engagement due to role clarity and well-defined expectations. In contrast, non-franchise coffee shops tend to have more flexible and less formal organizational structures. SOPs may not be as strict or clearly defined as in franchise settings, which can lead to some uncertainty regarding roles and responsibilities. However, this flexibility can also offer baristas greater opportunities to innovate and participate in decision-making processes, which may, in turn, enhance work engagement if managed effectively.

In addition, another important factor is rewards and incentives. Franchise coffee shops typically have more structured reward and incentive systems, including bonuses, performance recognition, and clearer career advancement opportunities. This can enhance work engagement, as employees feel that their efforts are acknowledged and that there are tangible opportunities for career growth. In contrast, non-franchise coffee shops may have more varied and less formal reward systems. However, baristas often develop more personal relationships with the owners, which can create a warmer and more supportive work environment.

Another factor is the work environment and organizational culture. Franchise coffee shops usually have an established work culture that is consistently implemented across all branches. This provides baristas with a stable and predictable work environment, which can contribute to higher work engagement. Meanwhile, in non-franchise coffee shops, the work culture may be more diverse and largely dependent on the owner or manager. This variability can be either an advantage or a challenge, depending on how well the culture supports employees and fosters their engagement.

Finally, another factor is autonomy and innovation. In franchise coffee shops, policies and procedures are typically strict, which may limit baristas' autonomy in making daily decisions. However, this level of structure and stability can provide a sense of security and, in turn, foster work engagement. In contrast, non-franchise coffee shops often allow baristas greater freedom to experiment and innovate. This increased autonomy can enhance work engagement, particularly when employees feel that their ideas are valued and implemented.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that work engagement among baristas is strongly influenced by the availability of job resources, leadership style, and the overall work environment. Both participants highlighted how opportunities to learn, supportive relationships, and meaningful involvement in work activities contributed to their motivation and willingness to stay engaged. These results suggest that engagement is not only shaped by the nature of the job itself, but also by how the workplace is managed and experienced on a daily basis. The results are in line with previous studies by Burr et al. (2019) and Dubbelt et al. (2019), which emphasize the importance of job resources such as social support, autonomy, and feedback. In this study, Participant "I" described how being given the opportunity to learn beyond barista duties, such as handling technical issues and understanding management, made the job more meaningful. Similarly, Participant "A" emphasized the importance of a supportive and family-like environment, which created a sense of comfort and belonging. These experiences reinforce the idea that when employees feel supported and valued, their engagement tends to increase.

From a theoretical interpretation, these findings confirm the proposition of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model that job resources act as primary drivers of motivation and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The results also align with Conservation of Resources theory, which explains that individuals maintain engagement when they perceive resource gain such as support, autonomy, and skill development (Hobfoll, 2001). In this context, baristas in both franchise and non-franchise settings demonstrate that resource accumulation directly strengthens psychological investment in work. At the same time, the findings also reflect the negative side of workplace experiences. In line with Dubbelt et al. (2019) and Shin et al. (2019), both participants acknowledged that lack of appreciation and unfair treatment can reduce motivation and create stress. Participant "I," for example, explained that being blamed without recognition for completed work could be discouraging. This highlights how simple aspects such as acknowledgment and respectful communication can make a significant difference in maintaining engagement.

This pattern is also consistent with emotional labor theory, which argues that service workers are vulnerable to emotional depletion when positive feedback is absent and negative

evaluation dominates (Grandey, 2000). In addition, perceived organizational injustice reduces intrinsic motivation and weakens psychological attachment to work (Colquitt, 2001). In service-based industries such as coffee shops, emotional regulation demands become higher when recognition systems are weak or inconsistent.

Leadership also appears to play a key role in shaping engagement. The experiences shared by both participants are consistent with the concept of transformational leadership discussed by Kark and Van Dijk (2019). Participant “I” described their manager as a role model who not only provided guidance but also inspired personal growth. Meanwhile, Participant “A” felt motivated when the café owner involved them in internal projects and decision-making processes. These findings suggest that leadership that is supportive, inspiring, and inclusive can strengthen employees’ sense of ownership and commitment to their work. This aligns with Bass and Avolio’s transformational leadership framework, which emphasizes inspirational motivation and individualized consideration as key predictors of employee engagement (McCall, 1986). Furthermore, social support theory suggests that supervisor support functions as a buffering mechanism that reduces strain and increases job satisfaction (House, 1981). In service contexts, leadership is not only structural but also relational, shaping how employees interpret their daily work meaning.

Another important point from this study is the difference between franchise and non-franchise coffee shops. Franchise coffee shops tend to offer clearer structures, standardized procedures, and more predictable work environments. This can help employees understand their roles and reduce uncertainty. On the other hand, non-franchise coffee shops often provide more flexibility and room for creativity. While this may sometimes lead to less clarity, it can also give employees a stronger sense of involvement and opportunity to contribute ideas. This study suggests that both systems have their own strengths, and their impact on engagement depends on how they are implemented. From a theoretical perspective, these findings support the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework, particularly the idea that job resources can enhance engagement and buffer the effects of job demands. In practice, the results indicate that managers and business owners should pay close attention to how they support employees not only through formal systems such as rewards and career paths, but also through daily interactions, communication, and trust.

From a psychological economics perspective, the difference between franchise and non-franchise systems reflects a trade-off between predictability and autonomy. Structured environments reduce cognitive uncertainty but may limit intrinsic motivation, while flexible environments increase perceived control but may introduce role ambiguity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This trade-off influences perceived utility of work conditions and ultimately shapes engagement intensity. However, this study has several limitations. The number of participants is limited, and the findings are based on specific individual experiences, which means they may not fully represent all baristas. In addition, the qualitative approach relies on subjective perceptions, which may be influenced by personal bias. Other factors, such as salary, workload, or individual personality, were not explored in detail and may also affect work engagement. Additionally, the study does not account for organizational-level variability such as management style differences across branches or economic pressure variations in small businesses. This limits external validity and generalizability across broader service industries

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). The absence of triangulation with quantitative engagement measures also restricts the ability to validate the intensity of engagement levels reported by participants.

Future research could involve a larger number of participants and include different types of coffee shops or regions to provide a broader perspective. It would also be useful to combine qualitative and quantitative methods to strengthen the findings. Further studies could explore additional variables, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or career development opportunities. In conclusion, this study highlights that work engagement among baristas is shaped by a combination of job resources, leadership, and work environment. Supportive relationships, opportunities for growth, and meaningful involvement in work appear to be key factors in maintaining engagement. Understanding these elements can help coffee shop owners and managers create a more positive and engaging workplace.

Future research is also recommended to integrate multilevel modeling approaches to examine how organizational structure interacts with individual psychological traits in shaping engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Additionally, integrating emotional labor measurement and reward fairness perception would improve predictive accuracy of engagement models in service industries (Grandey, 2000; Maslach & Leiter, 2022). Longitudinal designs are also recommended to capture how engagement evolves over time under varying job demand conditions (Bakker et al., 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

Work engagement among baristas is shaped by the interaction between job resources, leadership practices, and the broader organizational environment. The study indicates that engagement emerges when employees experience supportive working conditions, clear roles, and opportunities for growth within their workplace. These factors collectively strengthen psychological involvement, motivation, and commitment in service-oriented work settings.

The findings highlight that the quality of workplace relationships and organizational practices plays a central role in sustaining employee engagement. A work environment that provides trust, communication, and recognition tends to strengthen employees' sense of meaning and belonging in their roles. Conversely, insufficient acknowledgment and weak relational support can reduce motivation and weaken engagement over time. Leadership is also identified as a critical element in shaping employee engagement. Leadership practices that emphasize guidance, clarity, and emotional support contribute to stronger employee involvement and commitment. At the same time, organizational structure influences engagement differently depending on how it is implemented. More structured systems provide clarity and stability, while more flexible systems allow room for autonomy and innovation. Both approaches can support engagement when managed effectively.

Overall, work engagement in service-based workplaces is not determined by a single factor, but by the balance between structural support, interpersonal dynamics, and leadership quality. Engagement becomes stronger when employees feel supported, trusted, and given opportunities to develop within a stable yet adaptive work system.

Future research is recommended to expand the scope of participants and explore different organizational contexts to strengthen the generalizability of findings. Further studies may also

examine additional psychological and organizational factors that may influence engagement, particularly in service-based industries, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of employee engagement dynamics.

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