

**Organizational Culture and Job Satisfaction:
The Mediating Role of Work-Life Balance in the Airline Industry**

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Abstract

This study examined the interrelationships among organizational culture (OC), job satisfaction (JS) and work-life balance (WLB) among 180 airline ground staff in Thailand using a cross-sectional quantitative design. Based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, Spillover Theory, and Social Exchange Theory (SET), the study examined a mediation model to investigate whether work-life balance mediates the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction. Validated instruments were adapted, back-translated, and pilot-tested (Cronbach's $\alpha > .85$). Results showed strong positive correlations among the three constructs, with organizational culture and work-life balance jointly

explaining 40% of the variance in job satisfaction. Path analysis confirmed partial mediation, indicating that 31% of organizational culture's total effect on job satisfaction operates through work-life balance ($B = 0.17$, 95% CI [0.10, 0.25]). The model demonstrated excellent fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.41$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .03). The findings reveal that a supportive, participative culture directly and indirectly enhances job satisfaction by promoting balance and well-being. This study extends prior JD-R applications by empirically integrating work-life balance as a mediating mechanism in a high-reliability aviation context, offering actionable insights for managerial, HR, and policy-level interventions in employee welfare and retention. Future research should employ longitudinal and multi-group structural equation modeling to establish causality and investigate whether the mediation model holds across different genders, tenures, and cross-cultural settings.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Work–Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Mediation, Airline Industry, JD-R Model

1. Introduction

Understanding how organizational systems sustain employee well-being has become a central concern in modern service industries, particularly in aviation, where safety, customer satisfaction, and human reliability are tightly interlinked. Air transport is a high-reliability, 24/7 service sector where irregular schedules, safety-critical tasks, and extensive customer interaction make human resource factors crucial to operational success. Contemporary studies consistently link organizational culture (OC) and work-life balance (WLB) with job satisfaction (JS) across industries (Adriano & Callaghan, 2020). Systematic reviews further confirm that work-life balance positively predicts job satisfaction, while mitigating stress and turnover intentions (Maharani & Tamara, 2024). Within the airline sector, research indicates that staff satisfaction is heavily influenced by scheduling, recovery opportunities, and perceived organizational support, underscoring the importance of culture and balance in maintaining both service quality and a safe climate (Öztirak, 2025). Likewise, findings from related service fields confirm that supportive and ethical organizational cultures foster teamwork and innovation, thereby enhancing employee commitment and organizational performance (Ardebilpour et al., 2024; Park & Hyun, 2021).

Despite these advancements, several research gaps persist. First, few studies have simultaneously examined the mechanism through which organizational culture influences job satisfaction through work-life balance, particularly within airline contexts where operational demands are intense and time-based pressures are chronic. Most prior studies explore these constructs in isolation, missing the integrated relationships that explain how cultural resources shape satisfaction through balance. Second, although organizational culture and work-life balance have been widely studied in hospitality and tourism, empirical mediation models contextualized to the airline industry remain unexplored (Adriano & Callaghan, 2020; Pulungan & Tiarapuspita, 2024). Third, while Denison's model of organizational culture and multidimensional work-life balance scales, such as Hayman's (2005), are widely applied, limited research has validated their transferability from hospitality to aviation, a high-stress environment with distinct safety and scheduling imperatives (Ardebilpour et al., 2024; Masi et al., 2023). These gaps indicate the need for a theory-driven, contextually grounded model that explains how organizational culture fosters employee satisfaction through balance among airline employees.

Guided by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, Spillover Theory, and Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study investigated the mediating role of work-life balance in the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction among airline ground staff. It posits that organizational culture operates as a systemic job resource that mitigates strain,

enhances motivation, and promotes reciprocal employee engagement. Specifically, the study proposed that cultural dimensions such as clarity, fairness, teamwork, and adaptability buffer the job demands typical of airline operations, irregular shifts, emotional labor, and time pressure by improving employees' perceived balance between work and personal life. By empirically validating this mediation framework, the study contributed to an integrated understanding of how structural (cultural), psychological (balance), and relational (exchange) resources jointly sustain satisfaction and performance in high-reliability service environments.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily anchored on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, which posits that employee well-being and attitudes result from the dynamic interplay between job demands and job resources (Bakker et al., 2023). In airline settings characterized by irregular shifts, high emotional labor, and passenger-safety responsibilities, organizational culture (OC) provides vital job resources, such as social support, participative decision-making, fairness, and goal clarity that can buffer the strain caused by demanding schedules and operational pressures. These resources enhance employees' energy and motivation, fostering both work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (JS) (Nadhilah et al., 2024; Rachmawati et al., 2024).

Complementing the JD-R perspective, Spillover Theory explains how experiences in one life domain influence outcomes in another. Positive organizational experiences such as supportive leadership, collegiality, and fair practices “spill over” into personal life, reducing work-to-home conflict and promoting enrichment (Vadvilavičius & Stelmokienė, 2024). This process highlights work-life balance as a crucial mediating mechanism translating organizational resources into affective and attitudinal outcomes.

Additionally, Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Cropanzano et al., 2017) clarifies the relational logic behind this mechanism. Employees who perceive their organization as supportive, fair, and participative are more likely to reciprocate with positive attitudes and higher satisfaction. Within this relational contract, work-life balance acts as an evaluative lens: employees who feel their organization enables balance between professional and personal roles develop more substantial affective commitment and satisfaction (Bandyopadhyay, 2024; Udin, 2023).

Classic theories remain informative but are treated here as contextual anchors rather than primary explanatory lenses. Schein's (2017) conception of organizational culture as shared assumptions guiding behavior defines the construct's boundaries, while Herzberg's (1966) Two-Factor Theory clarifies the distinction between hygiene factors (e.g., scheduling, pay) and motivators (e.g., recognition, growth) underlying job satisfaction. Together, these foundational views complement the JD-R, Spillover, and SET integration, forming a multilevel explanation of how supportive culture fosters balance and satisfaction among airline employees.

3. Conceptual Framework

Guided by the integrated theoretical triad, this study conceptualizes organizational culture as a multidimensional system of resources defined by Denison's traits - involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission each representing a distinct type of job resource. Involvement promotes autonomy and social support, consistency ensures fairness and role clarity, adaptability nurtures learning and responsiveness, and a clear mission provides purpose and direction. These resources mitigate aviation job demands and facilitate work–life balance, operationalized through work-to-family interference, family-to-work interference, and work-personal enhancement (Hayman, 2005). In turn, a balanced work-life interface positively influences job satisfaction, encompassing affective responses to aspects such as supervision, pay, promotion, coworkers, and the work itself (Spector, 1985).

Integrating these perspectives, the model proposes that a supportive organizational culture enhances work-life balance, which subsequently improves job satisfaction. Through JD-R, culture acts as the resource base; through Spillover, balance mediates cross-domain effects; and through SET, satisfaction emerges as reciprocation for supportive culture and balance facilitation. Thus, work-life balance functions as the mediating variable between organizational culture and job satisfaction in airline operations.

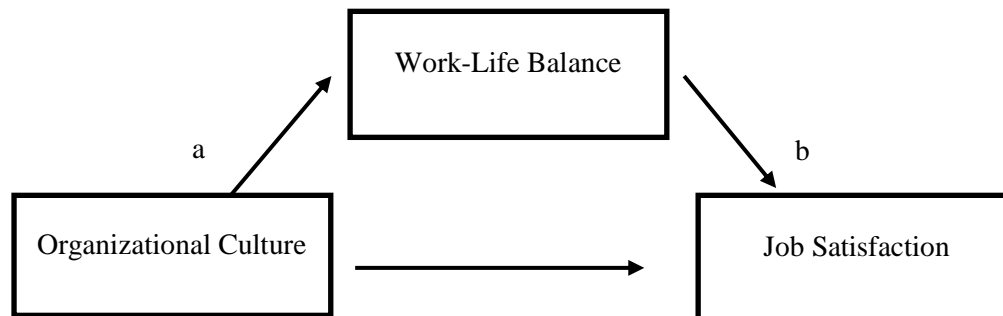


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram showing the interplay of the variables

4. Research Questions

- 4.1 What is the perceived level of organizational culture?
- 4.2 What is the perceived level of job satisfaction?
- 4.3 What is the perceived level of work-life balance?
- 4.4 Is there a significant relationship between organizational culture, job satisfaction, and work-life balance?
- 4.5 Is there a significant difference in the level of organizational culture, job satisfaction, and work-life balance among the respondents when grouped according to their demographic profile?
- 4.6 To what extent do organizational culture and work-life balance singly and jointly predict job satisfaction?
- 4.7 To what extent does work-life balance mediate the effect of organizational culture on job satisfaction?

5. Research Objectives

- 5.1 To examine the levels of organizational culture, work-life balance, and job satisfaction among airline ground staff in Thailand.
- 5.2 To investigate the relationships among organizational culture, work-life balance, and job satisfaction.
- 5.3 To determine whether work-life balance mediates the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction.

6. Hypotheses

- H₁: There is a significant relationship between organizational culture, job satisfaction, and work-life balance.
- H₀₂: There are significant differences in the levels of organizational culture, job satisfaction, and work-life balance when respondents are grouped according to demographic profile
- H₀₃: Organizational culture and work-life balance significantly predict job satisfaction, either singly or jointly.
- H₀₄: Work-life balance significantly mediates the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction.

7. Research Methodology

A cross-sectional quantitative approach was employed to analyze the predictive and mediating relationships among Organizational Culture (OC), Job Satisfaction (JS), and Work–Life Balance (WLB) without manipulating variables (Setia, 2016). The study was conducted among airline ground staff employed by major airlines operating in Thailand, representing diverse operational and service contexts. A total of 180 participants were selected through stratified convenience sampling to ensure representation across departments, and proportional representation was maintained (Nikolopoulou, 2023).

An a priori power analysis using G*Power 3.1 indicated that at least 120 participants were required ($\alpha = .05$, $f^2 = .15$, power = .95). The final sample size of 180 was set to compensate for potential non-responses and enhance generalizability. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires adapted to the Thai aviation context. To ensure linguistic and cultural equivalence, all instruments underwent back-translation and were pilot-tested with 30 airline ground staff. The pilot test yielded satisfactory reliability coefficients (Cronbach's $\alpha > .85$ for all constructs), confirming clarity and comprehension. Minor wording adjustments were made to three items to improve contextual relevance.

Organizational Culture (OC) was measured using 22 items adapted from Denison and Neale (1996), with contextual modifications from Chiang and Jang (2008) and Hsieh and Hsieh (2001) to reflect the service operations environment. The scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$) and strong construct validity, as indicated by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results (CFI = .975, TLI = .969, RMSEA = .039, SRMR = .026). Job Satisfaction (JS) was assessed using an adapted version of Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). Content Validity Indices (CVI) were computed following Lynn's (1986) procedure: item-level CVIs (I-CVI) ranged from 0.82 to 1.00, and the scale-level CVI (S-CVI/Ave) was 0.93, exceeding the recommended 0.80 threshold and confirming scale relevance and clarity. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) before CFA supported construct dimensionality (KMO = .88, Bartlett's $p < .001$), indicating adequate sampling adequacy and factorability. Work–Life Balance (WLB) was measured using 15 items adapted from Hayman (2005). The instrument exhibited high reliability ($\alpha = .92$) and excellent model fit in CFA (CFI = .977, TLI = .971, RMSEA = .038, SRMR = .025).

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the distributions of the variables. Pearson's r was used to test inter-variable relationships, t-tests and ANOVA assessed group differences, and multiple regression analysis identified predictors of job satisfaction. Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrapped samples was used to test the mediating role of WLB. Statistical assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity ($VIF < 2$) were satisfied.

To address potential common method bias (CMB), procedural remedies such as anonymity and item randomization were implemented, complemented by a statistical test using a common latent factor (CLF) in AMOS. Standardized loadings between the CLF and non-CLF models differed by less than .20, indicating that CMB accounted for less than 5% of total variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and based on informed consent in accordance with the World Medical Association (2013) and APA Ethical Standards (2020).

8. Research Results and Discussions

The findings in Table 1 indicate that employees perceive their organization's culture as very strong and supportive, with an overall weighted mean of 4.22 ($SD = 0.69$) interpreted as *Very High*. The result suggests that airline ground staff operate within a highly cohesive and ethically grounded work environment that fosters cooperation, shared goals, and commitment, an essential condition for sustaining service quality and safety in aviation operations.

Among the indicators, the highest-rated dimensions were *teamwork and cooperation* ($M = 4.40$), *employee contribution to success* ($M = 4.36$), and *ethical standards guiding behavior* ($M = 4.33$). These reflect a culture that values collaboration, moral integrity, and participative contribution to organizational goals - core elements of Denison's (1996) *Involvement* and *Consistency* dimensions. Such cultural patterns serve as critical job resources in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, providing employees with emotional and social support to buffer high workload and time pressure typical of airline service environments (Mansour & Azeem, 2024). When staff members experience trust, shared mission, and autonomy, they are better able to manage stressors and maintain motivation, which in turn enhances engagement and satisfaction (Ghani et al., 2023; Lee & Kim, 2023).

In contrast, the lowest-rated indicator was *the company's ability to adapt well to competition and environmental shifts* ($M = 3.95$), although it still fell within the *High* category. This relatively lower score signals that while the internal culture is cohesive, staff may perceive the organization as slower to adapt to market or operational changes. This gap suggests the need for more active management practices and continuous feedback systems to strengthen the *Adaptability* dimension of organizational culture. Contemporary studies highlight that dynamic capability, particularly the ability to respond quickly to passengers and industry shifts is crucial for sustaining a competitive advantage and psychological safety in high-demand service sectors (Sampaio et al., 2024; Soklaridis et al., 2024).

Looking into the lens of Social Exchange Theory (SET), the exceptionally high evaluations demonstrate reciprocal trust between the organization and its ground staff. When employees perceive fairness and transparent leadership, they feel a moral obligation to reciprocate through improved performance, loyalty, and discretionary effort (Dechawatanapaisal, 2025; Eisenberger et al., 2020). This reciprocal exchange reinforces job satisfaction and commitment, illustrating the direct social-relational pathway connecting culture to individual and organizational outcomes.

Table 1 Respondents' Perceived Level of Organizational Culture Practices (N = 180)

	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Decisions are made based on adequate and accurate information.	4.28	0.64	Very High
2	Information is openly shared with employees.	4.15	0.71	High
3	Employees believe their roles make a positive contribution to the airline's success.	4.36	0.62	Very High
4	Teamwork and cooperation are strongly emphasized in the workplace.	4.40	0.59	Very High
5	The organization provides continuous opportunities for employee skill development.	4.08	0.73	High
6	Developing employee abilities is considered vital for airline's competitiveness.	4.22	0.65	Very High
7	Leaders and employees clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.	4.30	0.63	Very High
8	Employees are aware of and guided by the organization's core values.	4.12	0.72	High
9	Ethical standards consistently guide employee behavior.	4.33	0.61	Very High
10	Employees can easily reach consensus on key organizational issues.	3.98	0.80	High
11	Departments coordinate and share information effectively.	4.05	0.75	High
12	There is harmony of purpose among different organizational levels.	4.10	0.69	High
13	The organization responds quickly and effectively to change.	4.02	0.78	High
14	The company adapts well to competition and environmental shifts.	3.95	0.82	High
15	Customer feedback is used to improve services and operations.	4.18	0.69	High
16	Mistakes and failures are treated as learning opportunities.	4.10	0.71	High
17	Employees who take innovative or calculated risks are recognized and rewarded.	3.92	0.83	High
18	The organization has clear long-term goals and direction.	4.32	0.65	Very High
19	The mission and objectives are clearly communicated to all employees.	4.20	0.68	High
20	Organizational goals are realistic and agreed upon by everyone.	4.25	0.66	Very High

21	There is a shared vision that motivates and inspires employees.	4.30	0.63	Very High
22	The organization maintains a forward-looking, long-term perspective.	4.18	0.70	High
Overall Weighted Mean		4.22	.69	Very High

Remarks: 4.21 – 5.00 Very; 3.41 – 4.20 High; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low

Overall, these results highlight that a strong, participative, and ethical organizational culture functions as both a motivational and relational resource, aligning with the JD-R and SET frameworks. It not only buffers the challenges inherent in airline operations but also cultivates employee satisfaction and retention. Thus, enhancing cultural adaptability and maintaining transparent, value-based leadership are strategic imperatives for sustaining both employee well-being and organizational resilience in the aviation industry.

As shown in Table 2, respondents reported a high level of job satisfaction, with an overall weighted mean of 3.73 ($SD = 0.82$), indicating that airline ground staff generally view their work environment positively, despite the operational pressures inherent to the aviation industry.

The highest-rated indicators included *opportunities for continuing education* ($M = 4.22$) and *enjoyment of teamwork* ($M = 4.12$), suggesting that airline ground staff find fulfillment through learning opportunities, collegial relationships, and supportive work environments. This is in consonance with Herzberg's (1966) Two-Factor Theory, which posits that growth and interpersonal factors serve as intrinsic motivators. Recent evidence confirms that professional development and social cohesion foster more substantial affective commitment and satisfaction in high-stress service sectors (Shiri et al., 2023). Within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, such cultural and interpersonal supports function as job resources that enhance engagement and buffer strain (Bakker et al., 2014).

Table 2 Respondents' Perceived Level of Job Satisfaction (N = 180)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Breaks provided for by law are observed.	3.92	0.76	High
2. I am satisfied with the duty roster and working time regulations.	3.78	0.82	High
3. My workload is appropriate.	3.61	0.88	High
4. I can perform my work with the same quality even under time pressure.	3.44	0.91	High
5. My company has sufficient staff.	3.28	0.97	Moderate
6. I can really relax during my time off work.	3.72	0.86	High
7. There is strong pressure to perform in the company.	3.12	0.94	Moderate
8. My job poses a threat to my private and family life.	2.98	0.99	Moderate
9. Women and men are paid equally and fairly.	3.66	0.83	High
10. I am satisfied with my remuneration.	3.47	0.88	High
11. I would like to continue my education.	4.22	0.69	Very High
12. I have good opportunities for advancement within the company.	3.74	0.81	High
13. My company offers further training opportunities related to my job.	3.65	0.85	High
14. Further training is compatible with my working hours.	3.59	0.80	High
15. Women and men are equally accepted in the workplace.	4.01	0.71	High
16. I enjoy working together with my colleagues.	4.12	0.68	High
17. I can identify with the company culture.	3.84	0.79	High
18. There is a pleasant working atmosphere in the company.	4.03	0.73	High
19. There are regular team meetings in my department.	3.77	0.85	High
20. There is a lot of competition within the team.	3.31	0.97	Moderate
21. My relationship with my superiors is good.	3.91	0.76	High
22. My superiors deal with questions and concerns fairly.	3.84	0.82	High

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
23. My superiors make clear and comprehensible decisions.	3.73	0.85	High
24. My superiors leave me room to make my own decisions.	3.68	0.88	High
25. I receive praise from my superiors for good work.	3.57	0.87	High
26. My superiors allow criticism.	3.61	0.83	High
27. My superiors make decisions in consultation with the team.	3.76	0.79	High
28. My superiors provide regular personal feedback.	3.62	0.85	High
29. My job is meaningful and interesting.	4.08	0.71	High
30. My tasks in the company are clearly defined.	3.89	0.77	High
31. My job is varied.	3.94	0.73	High
32. My staff accommodation is clean and hygienic.	3.69	0.84	High
33. My workplace is easy for me to reach.	4.03	0.71	High
34. I am satisfied with the parking facilities for employees.	3.71	0.77	High
35. I am satisfied with the equipment in my staff accommodation.	3.58	0.80	High
36. I am satisfied with the catering for employees in the company.	3.54	0.86	High
Overall Weighted Mean	3.73	0.82	High

Remarks: 4.21 – 5.00 Very; 3.41 – 4.20 High; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low

Meanwhile, *staffing adequacy* ($M = 3.28$) and *pressure to perform* ($M = 3.12$) were among the lowest-scoring indicators, both in the *moderate* range, suggesting that while ground staff generally remain satisfied, persistent workload intensity and a limited workforce may erode long-term morale. Similar findings in aviation and hospitality research note that insufficient staffing heightens emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions (Ritaranta & Phetvaroon, 2024; Salama et al., 2022). From the JD-R perspective, these unmet structural supports represent job demands that, if left unaddressed, may erode the motivational potential of existing resources.

From a Social Exchange Theory (SET) viewpoint, the high satisfaction with *leadership fairness* ($M = 3.84$) and *transparent decision-making* ($M = 3.73$) reflect strong perceptions of reciprocity between supervisors and subordinates. When leaders act transparently and involve members in decision-making, employees reciprocate with greater commitment and satisfaction (Ly, 2024). Furthermore, the favorable scores on teamwork and role clarity demonstrate the Spillover effect, wherein positive organizational experiences and emotions extend beyond the workplace to enhance overall life satisfaction (Junsrithong, 2024).

Overall, the data reveal that job satisfaction among airline ground staff is sustained by developmental opportunities, supportive relationships, and fair supervision, while lingering operational constraints, particularly workload and staffing which require strategic management attention. The pattern supports the study's theoretical proposition that satisfaction is both a direct product of organizational culture and an indirect outcome mediated through work-life balance, illustrating the integrated dynamics of JD-R, SET, and Spillover frameworks.

As shown in Table 3 on the next page, employees reported a high level of work-life balance, with an overall weighted mean of 3.44 ($SD = 0.86$). The data suggests that, on average, airline ground staff experience a generally functional equilibrium between their professional and personal lives despite the irregular and demanding nature of their schedules.

The highest-rated indicators, "*I am in a better mood in my personal life because of my work*" ($M = 3.92$), and "*I am in a better mood at work because of my personal life*" ($M = 3.85$) highlight the presence of *work-life enrichment*, where positive experiences in one domain enhance affect in the other. This pattern aligns with Spillover Theory, which explains how positive emotions and psychological resources flow bidirectional across life domains (Enid et

al., 2025). When employees perceive autonomy, social support, and fairness at work, these experiences foster energy and well-being that extend into their personal lives.

Conversely, the lowest-rated items, “*My job makes my personal life difficult*” ($M = 3.18$) and “*My work performance suffers because of my personal life*” ($M = 3.07$), reflect persistent time- and strain-based interference. These results imply that although organizational supports are present, the structural demands of airline operations (e.g., shift work, customer intensity, and safety compliance) still create residual tension between work and non-work roles. Within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, such findings suggest that while job resources mitigate stress, they do not thoroughly neutralize the high job demands characteristic of service industries (Nizam et al., 2024).

From a Social Exchange Theory (SET) perspective, the high means in enrichment items suggest that ground staff perceive reciprocal support from management. When supervisors respect personal boundaries, acknowledge recovery needs, and promote flexibility, employees respond with loyalty and discretionary effort (Lee & Shin, 2023). This reciprocity builds organizational trust and reinforces satisfaction, demonstrating that balance is not only structural but relational.

Overall, the data reveal a partially balanced work-life interface characterized by positive spillover tempered by residual conflict. The findings validate the study’s theoretical proposition that a supportive organizational culture serves as a job resource enhancing well-being, which in turn fosters enrichment across life domains. Thus, strengthening flexible scheduling, recovery opportunities, and supervisor empathy remains essential to sustaining both employee satisfaction and operational effectiveness in high-demand airline environments.

Table 3 Respondents’ Perceived Level of Work–Life Balance (N = 180)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. My personal life suffers because of work.	3.32	0.92	Moderate
2. My job makes my personal life difficult.	3.18	0.95	Moderate
3. I neglect personal needs because of work.	3.41	0.89	High
4. I put my personal life on hold for work.	3.27	0.93	Moderate
5. I miss personal activities because of work.	3.46	0.87	High
6. I struggle to balance work and non-work commitments.	3.58	0.85	High
7. I am unhappy with the amount of time I have for non-work activities.	3.29	0.91	Moderate
8. My personal life drains me of energy needed for work.	3.21	0.88	Moderate
9. I am often too tired to be effective at work.	3.18	0.90	Moderate
10. My work performance suffers because of my personal life.	3.07	0.93	Moderate
11. It is hard to concentrate at work because of personal matters.	3.11	0.94	Moderate
12. My personal life gives me energy for my job.	3.77	0.79	High
13. My job gives me energy to pursue personal activities.	3.69	0.82	High
14. I am in a better mood at work because of my personal life.	3.85	0.76	High
15. I am in a better mood in my personal life because of my work.	3.92	0.74	High
Overall Weighted Mean	3.44	0.86	High

Remarks: 4.21 – 5.00 Very; 3.41 – 4.20 High; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low

Table 4 presents the relationships among organizational culture (OC), work–life balance (WLB), and job satisfaction (JS). All associations are strong, positive, and statistically significant ($p < .001$). The highest correlation was observed between OC and JS ($r = 0.712$), followed by OC and WLB ($r = 0.683$) and WLB and JS ($r = 0.648$). These coefficients indicate that improvements in any of the three constructs tend to correspond with favorable changes in the others.

Within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, these results confirm that a supportive organizational culture operates as a core job resource, enhancing employees' motivation and buffering work strain (Rahmania et al., 2025). The powerful OC-JS relationship ($r = 0.712$, $p < .001$) highlights a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction. This means that ground staff who perceive a more supportive, participatory, and ethically grounded organizational culture also report higher levels of job satisfaction. This result is similarly observed in recent service industry studies (Gbenga-Julius et al., 2025).

The strong correlation between organizational culture and work-life balance ($r = 0.683$, $p < .001$) indicates a significant and positive association, aligning with Spillover Theory, which posits that positive organizational experiences extend beyond the workplace and enhance personal well-being. Ground staff who perceive a supportive and value-driven culture report greater harmony between work and personal life. Such cultural attributes reduce work-to-home conflict and foster enrichment across life domains (Sun & Ishak, 2025). Within the framework of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, these findings suggest that strong organizational cultures serve as vital job resources, buffering strain and sustaining employees' balance and well-being.

The significant correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction ($r = 0.648$, $p < .001$) indicates that employees who achieve a healthier integration of professional and personal roles tend to experience greater satisfaction in their jobs. This strong positive relationship underscores the importance of organizational initiatives that promote balance, such as flexible scheduling and supportive leadership. The finding aligns with Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that when employees perceive their organization as valuing their well-being and respecting personal boundaries, they reciprocate through enhanced satisfaction, loyalty, and performance (Ferrón Vélchez et al., 2024; Li et al., 2022). Similarly, Intasorn et al. (2022) found that among air traffic controllers, job stress was primarily influenced by the nature of work, followed by colleague relationships, workplace environment, remuneration and welfare, family burden, and opportunities for career advancement. Together, these findings emphasize that organizational support for employee well-being not only mitigates stress but also fosters a more satisfied and committed workforce.

Collectively, these correlations provide empirical support for the study's hypothesized mediation model, suggesting that a strong and ethical organizational culture enhances work-life balance, which in turn elevates job satisfaction. This relational pattern substantiates the conduct of subsequent regression and mediation analyses aimed at quantifying the predictive and mediating effects of these variables.

Table 4 Correlation Matrix

Variables	r-value	p-value	Strength	Interpretation
Organizational Culture and Job Satisfaction	0.712	0.000	Very strong positive	Significant relationship
Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction	0.648	0.000	Strong positive	Significant relationship
Organizational Culture and Work-Life Balance	0.683	0.000	Strong positive	Significant relationship

Remarks: 0.00 to ± 0.10 Negligible Correlation; ± 0.10 to ± 0.30 Weak Correlation; ± 0.30 to ± 0.50 Moderate Correlation; ± 0.50 to ± 0.70 Strong Correlation; ± 0.70 to ± 1.00 Very Strong Correlation (Cohen, 1988)

Table 5 summarizes the differences in organizational culture (OC), work-life balance (WLB), and job satisfaction (JS) across demographic groups.

A significant difference in organizational culture emerged across age groups, $F(2, 177) = 3.21$, $p = .043$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$ (minor to moderate). Post hoc Tukey HSD tests indicated that ground

staff aged 40 and above ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.58$) rated organizational culture significantly higher than those aged 20-29 ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.66$; $MD = 0.37$, 95 % CI [0.05, 0.69]). Older ground staff are likely to have a deeper internalization of organizational values and greater access to job resources. Within the JD-R framework, prolonged exposure to supportive culture enhances resilience and commitment (Li et al., 2025).

No significant gender differences were found ($p > .05$) in any variable, indicating that both male and female employees perceived comparable cultural, balance, and satisfaction levels. This supports contemporary findings that equitable and inclusive human resources practices minimize gender-based disparities in job attitudes (Nisha et al., 2025). From a Social Exchange Theory (SET) view, gender-neutral treatment reinforces fairness norms that sustain satisfaction and reciprocal commitment (Hall et al., 2022).

Table 5 Differences in Organization Culture, Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction based on Demographic Profile

Profile Variable	Groups	Organizational Culture (M \pm SD)	Work-Life Balance (M \pm SD)	Job Satisfaction (M \pm SD)	Test Statistic	P-value	Effect Size / Post Hoc	Interpretation
Age	20–29	3.89 \pm 0.66	3.68 \pm 0.84	3.74 \pm 0.76	$F(2, 177)=3.21$	.043	Tukey HSD (40+ > 20–29, MD = 0.37, 95 % CI [0.05, 0.69]), $\eta^2 = .04$	Significant difference in OC
	30–39	4.15 \pm 0.61	3.91 \pm 0.82	4.03 \pm 0.61	—	—	—	—
	40+	4.26 \pm 0.58	4.12 \pm 0.79	4.11 \pm 0.59	—	—	—	—
Gender	Male	3.92 \pm 0.68	3.43 \pm 0.84	3.79 \pm 0.76	$t(178)=0.76$	.45	$d = 0.09$	Not significant
	Female	3.96 \pm 0.64	3.47 \pm 0.81	3.85 \pm 0.73	—	—	—	—
Years of Experience	< 5 yrs	3.83 \pm 0.69	3.31 \pm 0.87	3.71 \pm 0.79	$F(2, 177)=3.49$	.033	Games–Howell (10+ yrs > < 5 yrs, MD = 0.31, 95 % CI [0.02, 0.60]), $\eta^2 = .04$	Significant difference in WLB
	5–10 yrs	4.06 \pm 0.65	3.59 \pm 0.81	3.96 \pm 0.74	—	—	—	—
	10+ yrs	4.25 \pm 0.58	3.62 \pm 0.81	4.02 \pm 0.71	—	—	—	—
Position	Rank & File	3.87 \pm 0.71	3.31 \pm 0.87	3.85 \pm 0.71	$F(2,177) = 3.61$	.029	Tukey HSD (Supervisor/Manager > Rank & File; MD = 0.75, 95% CI [0.18, 1.32]), $\eta^2 = .04$	Significant difference in OC and WLB
	Supervisor	4.18 \pm 0.59	4.06 \pm 0.74	4.10 \pm 0.68	—	—	—	—

Profile Variable	Groups	Organizational Culture (M ± SD)	Work-Life Balance (M ± SD)	Job Satisfaction (M ± SD)	Test Statistic	P-value	Effect Size / Post Hoc	Interpretation
	Manager	4.29 ± 0.57	4.20 ± 0.69	4.28 ± 0.59	—	—	—	—

Years of experience significantly influenced work-life balance, $F(2, 177) = 3.49, p = .033, \eta^2 = .04$. Games–Howell comparisons revealed that employees with 10 or more years of service ($M = 3.62$) reported higher balance than those with < 5 years ($M = 3.31$; MD = 0.31, 95 % CI [0.02, 0.60]). According to Spillover Theory, experienced employees are better able to compartmentalize their work and non-work roles, converting stable routines into positive cross-domain enrichment (Escudero-Guirado et al., 2024). Within the JD-R logic, tenure also equates to familiarity with organizational systems and resource utilization (Bakker et al., 2023).

Organizational level produced significant differences in organizational culture and work-life balance, $F(2, 177) = 3.61, p = .029, \eta^2 = .04$. Tukey HSD results indicated that supervisors and managers ($M \approx 4.20$) rated both variables higher than rank-and-file employees ($M \approx 3.87$; MD = 0.75, 95 % CI [0.18, 1.32]). This pattern highlights hierarchical access to job resources, which are crucial JD-R resources that support balance and satisfaction. Under SET, managerial employees, entrusted with greater organizational support, reciprocate with stronger cultural identification and affective commitment (Ficapal-Cusí et al., 2020).

In a nutshell, demographic attributes, particularly age, tenure, and position demonstrate moderate ground staff access to and use of organizational resources. The equitable distribution of developmental opportunities, participatory decision-making, and flexible scheduling could therefore reduce disparities in cultural engagement and balance across employee groups, thereby strengthening collective satisfaction and performance (Kwon & Kim, 2025).

Table 6 Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Job Satisfaction

Predictor	B	SE B	95% CI for B	β	t	p	VIF	Interpretation
Organizational Culture (OC)	0.38	0.09	[0.20, 0.56]	0.42	4.22	< .001	1.28	Significant positive predictor
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	0.31	0.08	[0.15, 0.47]	0.36	3.88	< .001	1.28	Significant positive predictor
Constant	1.12	0.34	[0.45, 1.79]	—	3.29	.001	—	—
Model Summary								
	R	R²	Adjusted R²	F	p-value			
	0.63	0.40	0.39	59.22	<0.001			

Table 6 summarizes the multiple regression predicting job satisfaction (JS) from organizational culture (OC) and work-life balance (WLB). Both predictors were significant and positive: Organizational Culture → Job Satisfaction: $B = 0.38, SE = 0.09, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.20, 0.56], \beta = 0.42, t(177) = 4.22, p < .001$. Work-life Balance → Job Satisfaction: $B = 0.31, SE = 0.08, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.15, 0.47], \beta = 0.36, t(177) = 3.88, p < .001$.

The overall model was significant, $F(2, 177) = 59.22, p < .001$, explaining 40% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .40, \text{ Adjusted } R^2 = .39$). Multicollinearity was not a concern ($VIF = 1.28$). The 95% CIs confirm the precision and stability of both predictors' effects, underscoring their substantive significance rather than merely statistical significance.

These findings empirically support the hypothesized model in which organizational culture functions as both a direct and indirect driver of job satisfaction through work–life balance. Within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework, organizational culture acts as a systemic job resource providing clarity, autonomy, and social support that enhance motivation and buffer exhaustion (Lee, 2025). Employees embedded in cultures that emphasize teamwork, adaptability, and mission clarity interpret these as signals of meaning and value, producing higher affective satisfaction.

Simultaneously, work-life balance mediates this association through the Spillover mechanism: positive experiences at work extend into employees’ personal lives, replenishing emotional resources that feed back into work attitudes (Lott & Wöhrmann, 2022). Thus, balance operates as the psychological bridge linking cultural resources to satisfaction outcomes.

From a Social Exchange Theory (SET) perspective, these results illustrate a reciprocal dynamic, organizations that invest in employee well-being through supportive practices and flexible arrangements elicit reciprocation in the form of loyalty, engagement, and job satisfaction (Annosi et al., 2025; Lee & Kim, 2023). The model’s $R^2 = .40$ denotes a substantial effect size in behavioral science terms (Cohen, 1988), implying that nearly half of the variability in satisfaction is explained by cultural and balance factors.

The regression model consolidates JD-R, Spillover, and SET into a unified explanatory structure for employee well-being in high-demand service contexts. It demonstrates that organizational culture serves as the upstream resource that shapes balance perceptions, which in turn cultivates satisfaction. This integrated pathway clarifies why interventions that simultaneously strengthen culture and balance yield greater returns than isolated human resource programs. The effect magnitudes ($\beta \approx .40$) reinforce that cultural and balance mechanisms are not peripheral but central determinants of job satisfaction in aviation and analogous industries.

Table 7 Mediation and Path Analysis of Organizational Culture, Work–Life Balance, and Job Satisfaction

Effect / Path	B	SE	β	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
OC \rightarrow WLB (<i>a</i>)	0.49	0.07	0.50	6.99	< .001	Significant
WLB \rightarrow JS (<i>b</i> , controlling for OC)	0.35	0.07	0.38	4.93	< .001	Significant
OC \rightarrow JS (direct effect, <i>c'</i>)	0.37	0.08	0.34	4.63	< .001	Partial mediation; OC has a direct and indirect effect on JS through WLB
OC \rightarrow JS (total effect, <i>c</i>)	0.55	0.08	0.51	6.88	< .001	Significant
Indirect effect (<i>a</i> \times <i>b</i>)	0.17	0.04	—	—	< .001	Significant (Bootstrapped 95% CI [0.10, 0.25])
Proportion mediated (<i>ab</i> / <i>c</i>)	—	—	—	—	—	31% of the total effect of OC on JS is mediated through WLB

Table 7 presents the mediation results examining work–life balance (WLB) as the intervening variable between organizational culture (OC) and job satisfaction (JS). All direct and indirect paths were significant, confirming partial mediation.

Direct and Indirect Path:

Organizational Culture to Work-life Balance (Path A): Organizational culture significantly predicted work-life balance ($B = 0.49$, $\beta = 0.50$, $t = 6.99$, $p < .001$), indicating that

a supportive and participative culture enhances employees' perceived balance between work and personal life. Anchored in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, this relationship highlights that cultural resources help employees manage demands and prevent strain (Leifels & Zhang, 2023). This result aligns with Riasnugrahani et al. (2025), who observed that flexible and empowering cultures enhance balance and psychological recovery in service contexts.

Work-life Balance to Job Satisfaction (Path B): Controlling for organizational culture, work-life balance significantly predicted job satisfaction ($B = 0.35$, $\beta = 0.38$, $t = 4.93$, $p < .001$). Ground staff who perceive greater balance report stronger satisfaction, consistent with Spillover Theory, which proposes that positive affect and energy generated in one domain enhance experiences in another (Hasan et al., 2020). When organizations promote rest, flexible scheduling, and fair treatment, employees reciprocate with loyalty and satisfaction, an exchange dynamic central to Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Rajâa & Mekkaoui, 2025).

Organizational Culture to Job Satisfaction (Path C): Even after accounting for work-life balance, organizational culture remained a significant predictor ($B = 0.37$, $\beta = 0.34$, $t = 4.63$, $p < .001$), confirming a direct link. Employees who perceive teamwork, mission clarity, and ethical leadership experience intrinsic fulfillment and psychological safety, which elevate satisfaction independently of work-life balance (Dong et al., 2024).

Total and Indirect Effects

The total effect of organizational culture on job satisfaction was significant ($B = 0.55$, $\beta = 0.51$, $t = 6.88$, $p < .001$), and the indirect effect via work-life balance was $a \times b = 0.17$ (bootstrapped 95 % CI [0.10, 0.25]). Approximately 31 % of the total effect of organizational culture on job satisfaction was transmitted through work-life balance, supporting partial mediation. Hence, culture enhances satisfaction both directly, through positive organizational experiences, and indirectly, by promoting balance and well-being.

Model Fit Summary

The mediation model demonstrated excellent fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.41$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .03), indicating both theoretical coherence and empirical adequacy.

These indices confirm that the proposed structural paths are well-aligned with the observed data and support the study's integrated conceptual framework. The model substantiates that organizational culture serves as a critical job resource within the JD-R paradigm, exerting both motivational and strain-buffering influences. Cultures emphasizing involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission clarity mitigate work-home conflicts and foster enrichment across domains. The significant indirect effect reinforces Spillover Theory, showing that organizational support and ethical leadership generate emotional resources that extend beyond work to enhance general life satisfaction (Zheng et al., 2024). From the SET lens, these results confirm that when organizations invest in employee well-being, employees reciprocate through stronger satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (Saks, 2022).

This study provides empirical validation of the integrated JD-R, Spillover, and SET framework, which explains employee well-being in high-demand service industries. It demonstrates that organizational culture functions as a structural job resource that directly improves satisfaction and indirectly does so through balance. The quantified mediation (31%) advances Spillover Theory by specifying how work-derived resources spill over into non-work life and return as enhanced job attitudes. From an exchange perspective, supportive and ethical cultures function as relational infrastructures that convert organizational care into sustained satisfaction and employee retention.

Collectively, these results deepen theoretical understanding by linking structural (culture), psychological (balance), and relational (exchange) resources into a coherent mechanism for employee motivation and well-being.

9. Conclusions

This study examined the interrelationships among organizational culture (OC), work-life balance (WLB), and job satisfaction (JS) among 180 airline ground staff in Thailand, integrating the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, Spillover Theory, and Social Exchange Theory (SET).

Findings revealed a very strong and supportive organizational culture characterized by teamwork, ethical leadership, and a clear mission, as well as key job resources that sustain motivation and resilience. Ground staff also reported high job satisfaction and a balanced work-life integration, suggesting a positive enrichment between work and personal life despite the ongoing time-based strain typical of aviation work.

Correlation and regression analyses confirmed that organizational culture and work-life balance jointly explained 40% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .40$), underscoring the central role of cultural and balance-related resources in employee well-being. Path analysis further demonstrated partial mediation, with approximately 31% of the total effect of organizational culture on job satisfaction transmitted through work-life balance, validating the proposed integrated framework. A strong culture not only directly enhances satisfaction through shared purpose and ethical practices but also indirectly strengthens it by promoting balance and recovery.

Significantly, this study extends prior JD-R applications by empirically integrating work-life balance as a mediating mechanism in a high-reliability aviation context, providing concrete evidence that organizational culture functions as a structural, psychological, and relational resource system that drives sustainable satisfaction and well-being among employees. The findings empirically support the JD-R assertion that organizational resources buffer strain and amplify motivation, the Spillover proposition that positive affect transfers across life domains, and the SET principle that supportive organizational climates elicit reciprocal commitment and satisfaction. Collectively, the study establishes a theoretically coherent and empirically validated model linking culture, balance, and satisfaction in high-demand service industries.

10. Recommendations

From both theoretical and practical perspectives, the study provides several key insights for enhancing ground staff well-being, retention, and organizational resilience in the airline sector.

10.1 Short-Term Managerial Practices: Implement immediate, high-impact measures to enhance employee satisfaction and balance. Institutionalize a participative and learning-oriented culture that prioritizes open communication, teamwork, and fairness. Train supervisors in balance-supportive leadership and ensure transparency in decision-making and workload allocation. Introduce flexible scheduling, wellness and recovery programs, and feedback mechanisms to address time-based conflicts. Recognize employee contributions through regular performance dialogues and appreciation programs. These short-term actions operationalize the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework, directly enhancing motivation and buffering strain among frontline staff.

10.2 Strategic Organizational Interventions: Integrate well-being and balance goals into long-term organizational systems. Embed work-life balance indicators into HR audits, performance appraisals, and organizational climate surveys to institutionalize accountability for employee well-being. Develop comprehensive career development and succession planning programs that align with employee needs for stability and growth. Promote gender equity, fair workload distribution, and continuous leadership development, ensuring that the organization's culture remains inclusive and adaptive to changing operational contexts. Such systemic

interventions reinforce Social Exchange Theory (SET) principles by cultivating mutual trust and long-term commitment between the organization and its workforce.

10.3 Policy-Level Implications: Civil aviation regulators and human resource accrediting bodies should establish industry-wide well-being standards that promote organizational culture audits, balanced scheduling policies, and safety-linked fatigue management systems. Civil aviation authorities could require certification frameworks that require airlines to demonstrate compliance with work–life balance and ethical leadership metrics as part of their licensing or audit processes. By integrating these guidelines, regulators help ensure that employee welfare, service quality, and safety performance remain interdependent goals in the aviation industry.

10.4 Research Directions: Future research should extend this integrated JD-R-Spillover-SET model to other high-reliability service industries to examine its generalizability. Longitudinal and mixed-method studies are recommended to test causal mechanisms and capture the lived experiences of cultural and balance-oriented reforms. Comparative analyses across airlines, national cultures, and labor systems can further elucidate how cultural norms influence the interplay among organizational culture, work-life balance, and employee satisfaction.

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