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The influence of psychological climate for caring and perceived insider status on the relationship between managerial caring and positive employee well-being

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Abstract: Learning the factors that positively impact employee well-being is not a new stream of study. The care and support provided by managers can influence employees' motivation and overall well-being. The positive emotional environment created by a caring climate can significantly impact how individuals feel and function in their professional lives. Additionally, perceived insider status, which reflects a sense of belonging and integration, can positively affect self-esteem and well-being. Social identity theory posits that positive well-being occurs when individual employees feel that they are surrounded by a climate of care signaled by the direct manager and overall employee acceptance within the organization, which ultimately influences their overall positive well-being. This study collected data from 197 employees working in the service sector in different industries within the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through survey questionnaires using a convenience sampling technique. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) version 4 was used to analyze the dataset and test the hypotheses. The results indicate that managerial caring relates positively to positive employee well-being. Furthermore, a psychological climate of care and perceived insider status serially mediate the relationship between managerial caring and positive employee well-being. Thus, this study offers new insights into the importance of managerial care in employees' positive well-being within their organizations, as well as the caring model among managers and employees. Managers who show and develop an atmosphere of care toward employees enhance their positive well-being.

Keywords: managerial caring; psychological climate for caring; perceived insider status; positive employee well-being; caring; insider

1. Introduction

Research on positive employee well-being has significantly increased over the past 20 years (Ong & Johnson, 2023), with well-being and is considered crucial to the functioning of organizations (Wahab & Blackman, 2022). Employers today are looking for people who are emotionally involved in their work to support the success of their organizations (Park et al., 2017). Ensuring employees' well-being is critical in today's work climate because many firms have seen significant structural changes, such as longer working hours and increased job complexity (Park et al., 2017). Thus, higher levels of positive employee well-being (PEW) are associated with better health, including higher levels of positive feelings toward life in general. Human resource (HR) managers, business executives, and academic researchers now place high priority on comprehending the organizational components that affect PEW (Swanberg et al., 2011).

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In this study, managerial caring (MAC) is described as a facilitator that acts in ways that provide employees with a sense of a caring climate and help them advance their skills and attitudes in the workplace. Scholars and practitioners are now very interested in MAC, the climate for caring, developing caring models, and applying them to management and organizational psychology (Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Saks, 2021, 2022). The caring model has been widely implemented in healthcare, education, and sport management settings. Additionally, the scholars identified how managerial coaching influences PEW (Zhao & Liu, 2020), managerial support (Baker & Kim, 2020), and leadership (Park et al., 2017). However, little is known about the relationship between MAC and PEW, as well as what mechanism could explain such a relationship.

However, the business management literature has seldom featured studies on managerial caring and positive employee well-being in the UAE context. Specifically, this research examines the relationship between MAC and PEW as affected by perceptions of the psychological climate for caring (PCC) and perceived insider status (PIS). Aldabbas (2022), in their review of the literature on PIS spanning the last two decades, suggested that the exploration of managerial caring and its impact on positive employee outcomes represents a relatively novel area of study. In addition, Saks (2021) identified that research into organizational or managerial caring in relation to a caring climate and employee work outcomes is also needed.

This study suggests a serial mediation model to explain the relationship between MAC and PEW. The first mediator in this study is the perception of PCC; in particular, it focuses on workers' perceptions of management's concern for the workforce, as well as management's priorities regarding trust, respect, justice, a caring environment, and workplace safety (Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2020).

The second mediator in this study is PIS. Stamper and Masterson (2002) were among the first academic researchers to propose a theory for PIS, which relied on the understanding of social exchange theory. PIS makes employees feel better about their jobs and enhance employees' commitment to their jobs, thereby enhancing PEW (Kang et al., 2021). PIS occurs when individual employees feel that they are accepted by and included within the organization, which has an influence on PEW (Zhao & Liu, 2020). Employees with a high level of PIS experience a heightened sense of accomplishment and believe that their contributions are valued, which enhances PEW (Liu et al., 2022). Thus, PIS occurs through interactions between organizations and their workforce.

In this work, the main concepts focused on (e.g. MAC, PCC, PIS, and PEW) are explained using social identity theory (SIT). SIT is defined as "a social psychological theory that sets out to explain group processes and intergroup relations" (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 255). Thus, "social identification is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, P. 21). However, in SIT, the self is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize or classify social categories or classifications. SIT can be used to extensively explore how people perceive themselves as belonging to one group category (the in-group) compared to another (the out-group) (Stets & Burke, 2000).

This study examines the association between MAC and PEW through the mechanism of PCC and PIS based on the perception of inner identity by applying SIT. Specifically, PCC and PIS were chosen because PCC has been recognized as the degree to which people think a certain work climate is friendly, secure, encouraging, and capable of giving the feeling of being appreciated and respected (Newton et al., 2007), and PIS has been recognized as generating a sense of belonging and favorably influencing a range of employee outcomes and behaviors (Kumar et al., 2021). To address the aims of this study, the research was guided by the following question: Does

managerial caring influence positive employee well-being? If yes, through which mechanisms can this relationship be augmented?

This study hopes to contribute to the broader literature in some ways through this study. The first is to determine the extent to which PCC and PIS might explain the connection between MAC and PEW. Second, this research emphasizes three critical factors that could be antecedents of PEW. Specifically, these factors are MAC, perceptions of PCC, and PIS. Third, this study shed light on the importance of a specific MAC, the organizational climate of caring, and PIS in achieving the positive psychological well-being of employees in different industries. Finally, this work bridges the few studies that empirically examined caring models.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1 Managerial caring and positive employee well-being

Managers' behaviors play a crucial role in businesses' success, as their actions have a big impact on the productivity, morale, well-being, and work behavior of employees (Avolio et al., 2009; Kuoppala et al., 2008). MAC is defined "as a process wherein a manager exhibits inviting, advancing, capacitizing, and connecting behaviors toward an employee or employees" (Kroth and Keeler, 2009, p. 521). A great manager recognizes that employees are the most important assets of any organization. Managing by caring is a crucial managerial trait that affects both individuals and the organization. The greatest leaders with the most impact are those who genuinely care about their employees by ensuring that employees feel valued and appreciated (Saks, 2021). If workers have faith that their employer is looking to provide them the best benefits and encouraging their personal development and overall health and well-being, they will be more engaged and committed to the success of the organization (Saks, 2021).

Caring is frequently described in terms of its goals, which include fostering the growth, welfare, and overall well-being of other people; meeting the specific requirements of others; and cultivating a culture of caring, both in oneself and others (Louis et al., 2016). Although caring is seen as an essential guiding principle and a central value of some organizations (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014) and employees expect their employers to look after workers' mental health and well-being (Saks, 2022), this important managerial aspect has received little attention from management studies, and a comprehensive theoretical framework or model was still lacking at the time of writing (Houghton et al., 2015; Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Saks, 2021, 2022).

The relationship between manager and PEW represents a set of activities and interactions between a manager and an employee that affect the employee's well-being, either positively or negatively (Salmi et al., 2020). Previous studies on leadership and PEW have mostly investigated how certain leadership traits, behaviors, or styles affect subordinates (Perko, 2017). Nonetheless, there are direct indications that MAC is essential for and associated with PEW (Jax et al., 2018; Urick et al., 2021). For instance, managers need to formulate engagement strategies that center on a comprehensive vision of well-being, encompassing diverse dimensions, such as physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness (Urick et al., 2021). Because managers promote a caring climate to accomplish organizational tasks. To lessen the impact of unkind acts that harm outsiders, managers could also promote more compassionate traits and develop a healthy work atmosphere.

For instance, a recent study by Saks (2021) highlighted the detrimental impacts of the pandemic on the health and well-being of employees and the significance and necessity of corporations' caring for their employees. While some organizations showed a high level of care for their employees during the pandemic by allowing them to work remotely, offering them virtual care and support, and ensuring that all employees were taking the necessary

precautionary measures (e.g. using personnel protective care, getting the required vaccines, and testing for COVID-19), other organizations showed very little concern and care toward their employees by treating them as commodities, forcing them to work without social distancing, thereby putting them at risk of catching the virus. These organizations' careless behaviors negatively affected their employees' safety and well-being (Saks, 2021).

In another exploratory study conducted in the educational field, Louis et al., (2016) highlighted the significant role that school leaders play in the well-being and success of both students and teachers. In the same vein, leaders are vital in improving the well-being of others, both individuals and groups, whether in an organization, a community context, or society as a whole (Liedtka, 1996).

In the nursing and health science fields, MAC has emerged as a new theoretical concept related to care within the framework of nursing administration. This notion provided a foundation for understanding the function of nurse leadership in complex healthcare organizations (Abou Hashish & Khatab, 2018). Furthermore, the caring behavior of nurse managers toward their staff's health and well-being was seen as a critical predictor of the nurses' ability to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic (Faramawy & Abd El Kader, 2022). This prior literature confirms this work assumption that MAC has an effect on PEW in an organization. Thus, this study established the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Managerial caring is positively related to positive employee well-being.

2.2 Managerial caring and the psychological climate for caring

One of the keys to organizational success is cultivating a caring climate and work environment, in which people take initiative in their work, demonstrate the greatest engagement level, and are motivated to put in extra effort (Saks 2021). In particular, PCC places emphasis on employees' perceptions of their managers' care toward the workforce, as well as managers' priorities concerning respect, a caring atmosphere, trust, fairness, and safety in the workplace (Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2020). The climate for caring is defined "as the extent to which individuals perceive a particular setting to be interpersonally inviting, safe, supportive, and able to provide the experience of being valued and respected" (Newton et al., 2007, p. 70). Businesses should foster an ethical, caring environment that values their employees to assist them in achieving a higher sense of self-worth. This enables employees to get care and experience the warmth of their employer, which can be beneficial in improving employees' feelings, including creating a positive work mood and enhancing both physical and mental happiness (Li & Peng, 2022).

Scholars who have looked into the causes and effects of a caring, ethical work climate have concluded that management is the factor that has the greatest and most significant impact on a caring climate compared to other variables (Agrawal, 2017; Calabrese & Roberts, 2002; Li & Peng, 2022, Rathert & Fleming, 2008). This is because when managers set an example of care and ethics through their actions, their subordinates are more likely to do the same, as they take their manager's behavior as a reference. These studies not only improved this work's understanding of dominance and social salience but also underlined the need for inclusive, caring management in the quest to improve the caring, ethical climate. Managers should also place greater emphasis on having pleasant interactions with employees, actively encouraging and assisting staff in completing duties, enhancing employees' sense of belonging, and striving to establish an environment that is friendly and harmonious (Li & Peng, 2022).

Organizational caring practices represented by managers are unlikely to have a positive impact on a climate of care and concern for employees if employees believe that management does not care about their well-being and welfare (Saks, 2021). Similarly, Sembiring et al. (2020)

reported that organizational justice, which encompasses fairness and caring for employees, has a positive effect on a caring climate. These findings are consistent with those of Simons and Robertson (2003), according to whom there is a considerable and positive correlation between organizational justice and a caring climate. Therefore, it is essential for a manager to treat their personnel with dignity and fairness at all times, as the organization-wide implementation of organizational justice and care has a significant effect.

If managers are seen to be acting properly and with a high level of care, employees are more likely to empathize with them. As a result, a positive environment will be fostered, and managers will have an easier time accomplishing the organization's goals (Simons & Roberson, 2003). Therefore, a caring organizational system is most likely to positively impact employees' perceptions of the climate when managers uphold ethics regarding their care and concern for organizational members and behave in ways that demonstrate that they care about employees' health and well-being (Saks, 2021). Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 2. Managerial caring is positively related to perception of psychological climate for caring.

2.3 Perceived insider status and positive employee well-being

Insiders and outsiders are distinguished by the fact that "employers may use inducements such as benefits, training, and promotions to send signals to certain employees that they have achieved insider status (and subsequently send signals to employees who do not receive these inducements that they are outsiders)" (Stamper & Masterson, 2002, p. 877). PIS, referred also to as inclusion, is used to describe workers who feel appreciated and accepted within their group or organization (Aldabbas, 2022; Ding & Chang, 2020). For instance, when employees feel that they are part of the organization as an "insider," they are more likely to have good feelings and thoughts about their work and to be happier in the workplace (Zhao & Liu, 2020). Furthermore, these insiders understand that the social norm of reciprocity influences their behavior, and they will behave responsibly and in a way that adheres to the rules of the in-group circle and enhances the organization's well-being (Wang et al., 2017). The importance of the perception of being an insider is that people's psychological well-being is influenced by their inner strength (Ahmad et al., 2022). For example, Having and Hollister (2018) argued that care workers with a poor sense of insider status appeared to be less concerned with the effectiveness and well-being of their coworkers. Yeh et al. (2022) conducted an empirical study of 285 employees from the service industry in Taiwan and found that increasing employees' PIS increased their job happiness. Furthermore, Choi et al. (2018) argued that individuals with high PIS will be more satisfied with their work. Liu et al. (2022), found a positive and significant relationship between PIS and employee engagement for 205 healthcare employees. Based on previous empirical studies, this study argues that organizations can foster PEW by enhancing employees' perceptions that they are important and have a place in the organization as insiders.

SIT is based on the employee–employer relationship, academics have focused on the social interactions that strengthen the bond between people and their organizations. Seligman (2011) suggested that positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) constitute the components of well-being. Therefore, PERMA serves as the foundation for an ongoing, sophisticated process that will lead to a comprehensive theory regarding the facets of well-being (Seligman, 2018). Therefore, employees prefer to be a part of organizations that they believe to be respected and appreciated, and according to SIT (Tajfel, 1982), people aspire to be part of prestigious groups because the image of the group gives them pride and self-esteem (Guerrero et al., 2013). Therefore, when individuals believe that they are accepted,

recognized, trusted, and supported by their organizations, they are more likely to display preferred behaviors, such as increased positive well-being. Therefore, when employees acknowledge approval from their organization for their status, the relationship between employee and employer will improve and, as a result, favorably benefit PEW (Aldabbas, 2022). Based on these arguments, this study formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Perceived insider status is positively related to positive employee well-being.

2.4 Serial mediation effect of perception of PCC and PIS

This section examines the relationship between MAC and perceptions of PEW through two mediators: PCC and PIS. The advantages of receiving care and assistance from others are frequently used to explain how social connections and well-being are related. Therefore, work environment dynamics and lifestyle choices within an organization have an impact on people's daily lives (Wattoo et al., 2018). Employees need to react in a way that strengthens the caring relationship if they choose to alter their work behavior and influence their managers' future behavior. The environment will also have an impact on the likelihood that a caring relationship will develop. In other words, supportive and healthy environments are more likely to promote caring interactions (Saks, 2021).

Some of the traits of good mental health and a person's general well-being include confidence, health, cheer, and vigor (Wann, 2012). This study argues that an organization's success is expedited by its employees' happiness, which also shields it from declining productivity and rising health insurance costs. Therefore, organizations should ensure that their initiatives ultimately lead to better employee wellness. The physical environment of the workplace and the organizational climate of care are important factors determining PEW (Saleem et al., 2022; Santos et al., 2012). Therefore, it is suggested that perceptions of PCC and PIS aid in the creation of a positive work environment that fosters employees' positive well-being.

A recent empirical study conducted by Huang and He (2021) found that PIS is a key mediator of the association between HR practices and organizational citizenship behavior, which contributes to better thoughtful social identification through which HR practices promote organizational citizenship behavior. It was evident that PIS is important for employees to enhance their membership feeling in their organization, and as such, feeling will encourage them to actively engage in organizational citizenship behavior (Lv & Yu, 2020) and maintain a positive relationship between a proactive personality and organization-based self-esteem (Liao, 2015). Thus, how PIS mediates the relationship between MAC and PEW is still unknown. This study assumes, based on SIT, that once an employee perceives caring, trust, and safety from their management, a sense of belonging within the organization will be fostered among employees, which will positively affect PEW.

Zhao and Liu (2020) examined the limited literature on the mediating role of PIS in the relationship between managerial coaching and PEW. Their empirical study of 276 employees working for a large enterprise in China found that PIS mediates the association between managerial coaching and workplace well-being (Zhao & Liu, 2020). Furthermore, according to an empirical study of 926 employees across five nations, inclusion was found to be a significant mediator in the relationship between effective leadership and well-being (Adams et al., 2020). Thus, PIS is an important contextual motivational factor that signals an individual's desire to be promoted at work (Horng et al., 2016).

This work argues that organizations can foster a caring climate through their management (e.g. MAC). Specifically, management should communicate to employees the values of respect, trust, justice, and safety, which will improve their positive well-being. Thus, the perceptions of

PCC and PIS are proposed as serial mediators, since caring is described as an interest in someone that develops through information into a feeling and a commitment to support the person's existence and growth (Nyberg, 1990). Furthermore, a climate for caring creates a favorable work context that allows employees to thrive. Altogether, perceptions of PCC and PIS do not exist in a vacuum; management or direct supervisors should signal to employees that they are accepted by the organization. For example, management can ensure that employees are engaged in the organization's critical events and participate in decision-making, which will in turn enhance PEW.

In the context of self-categorization theory, Turner et al., (1987) highlighted that when employees participate in decision-making, assign assignments to managers, and participate in the future of the business, they feel trusted by their leader (Rouzi & Wang, 2021). Thus, this work argues that such trust and MAC will enhance employees' perceptions of PCC and PIS, which will foster PEW. Consequently, managers can actively encourage the spread of a caring climate culture by enhancing their workers' PIS. Therefore, this study assumed that perceptions of PCC and PIS serially mediate the relationship between MAC and PEW.

Hypothesis 4. The relationship between managerial caring and positive employee well-being is serially mediated by perception of psychological climate for caring and perceived insider status

Fig 1. Hypothesized Model
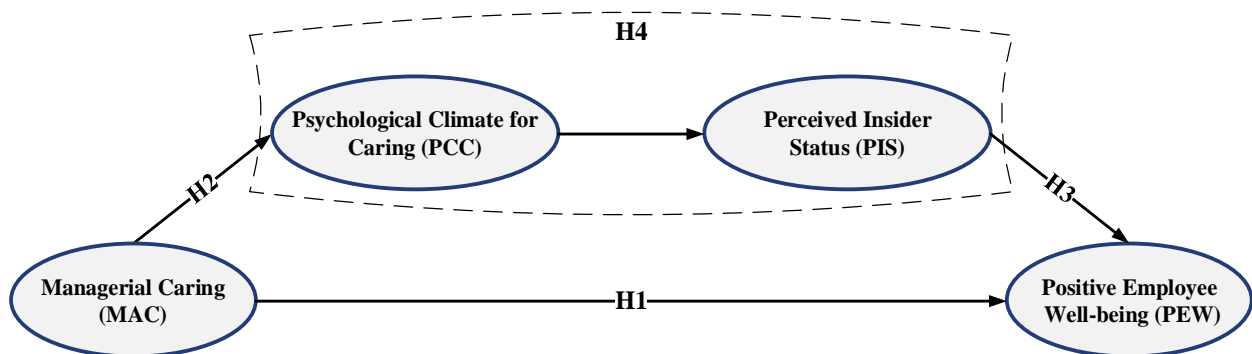
3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling and data collection

The population of this study was employees in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The study participants were chosen using a convenience sampling technique, which is considered one of the most efficient ways to contact respondents swiftly and economically (Dillman et al., 2014). Specifically, this research studied individuals employed across various sectors, such as education, healthcare, IT, banking, and finance, within the UAE. The respondents were sourced from the service industry and represented diverse sectors and occupations (e.g., customer service, marketing, teaching, accounting, and credit analysis). A total of 349 employees were invited to participate in the survey, but only 197 complete responses were used for further analysis. The response rate was 56.77%.

Specifically, an internet link (SmartSurvey.Com) that led to the survey was included in the invitation sent to participants. The first two weeks of October 2022 were used for data collection. The survey respondents were asked to be truthful because they were informed that the study was fully anonymous and confidential. The survey was structured into two sections: Section 1 contained 23 items (Appendix), and Section 2 contained four questions on demographic information. The demographic data are shown in Table 1. The questionnaire was conducted in

English, which is the second official language of the UAE and the primary language of communication in the workplace for a significant number of foreign workers (Aldabbas et al., 2022; Hussain et al., 2019).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Coding
Gender			
Female	94	47.72%	0
Male	103	52.28%	1
Age Range			
19-24	3	1.52%	1
25-34	56	28.43%	2
35-44	95	48.22%	3
45-54	34	17.26%	4
>55	9	4.57%	5
Employee tenure			
1-4	38	19.29%	1
5-9	47	23.86%	2
10-14	30	15.23%	3
15-20	25	12.69%	4
>21	57	28.93%	5
Education level			
High school	10	5.08%	1
Vocational /technical college	11	5.58%	2
Bachelor and above	176	89.34%	3

3.2 Measures

The four constructs used all concentrated on employee perception; hence, this study was conducted at the employee level. Participants responded to each item for all measures using a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), except PEW (0 = at no time to 5 = all of the time).

3.2.1 Managerial caring (MAC)

Six of the eight items that suited the study were chosen, with some of the wording changed to fit business settings (Louis et al., 2016). An example item is, "My manager develops an atmosphere of caring and trust." Cronbach's alpha for the sample was $\alpha = .914$.

The rationale for excluding two questions is as follows: For the first question, "My school administrator is supportive of my decisions about managing student discipline problems," the term "student" was utilized, and considering that we lacked data on similar roles (e.g., customer), making a substitution was not deemed appropriate. Put differently, the item revolved around three actors (principals, teachers, and students), whereas in the context of this study was solely concerned with the relationship between employer and employee. Second, the question "Our principal is responsive to the needs and concerns expressed by community members" focuses on the community aspect, which was determined to lie beyond the scope of this work investigation. Nevertheless, these conclusions were reached after consulting an academic expert and a senior

manager who served as an advisor. This process of consultation embodies the protocol of establishing content validity to which the authors adhered.

3.2.2 Psychological climate for caring (PCC)

Six items regarding perceptions of PCC were adopted from Weziak-Bialowolska et al., (2020). Example items were as follows: "Safety is a high priority in my workplace" and "Employees feel respected at work." Cronbach's alpha for the sample was α = .930.

3.2.3 Perceived insider status (PIS)

Stamper and Masterson's (2002) study explored and analyzed 10 items of the PIS scale, from which they chose 6 items. The scale is one-dimensional and has three positive items (e.g. "I feel very much a part of my work" and three reverse items ("I don't feel included in this organization"). Cronbach's alpha for the sample was α = .868.

3.2.4 Positive employee well-being (PEW)

This study adopted the five-item World Health Organization Well-Being Index (WHO-5), which is a short and generic global rating scale used to measure subjective well-being and contains positively phrased items only (Topp et al., 2015). The original WHO-5 scale was derived from the WHO-10 (Bech et al., 1996). The WHO-10 valid items were taken from Warr et al. (1985). The WHO-5 contains five items, such as "I have felt cheerful and in good spirits." It measures the degree of positive feelings experienced in the last two weeks. The WHO-5 uses a 6-point Likert scale response format (from 0 = at no time to 5 = all of the time). Cronbach's alpha for the sample was α = .913.

3.2.5 Control variables

Four employee characteristics were used as control variables to reduce the influence of potential alternative explanations for positive employee well-being. Background variables, such as gender, age, employee tenure in the same organization, and education level, may be important predictors of PEW. The four variables were coded to be executed simultaneously with the conceptual model (see Table 1).

4. Data analysis and results

PLS-SEM was used to test the reflective measurement model and a structural model based on a two-step procedure (assessment of measurement and structural models). In detail, this work used smart PLS-SEM 4 (Hair et al., 2021) to examine the direct impact of MAC on PCC, PIS, and PEW, as well as the mediating role of PCC and PIS. Data were entered into PLS-SEM and 5000 bootstrap iterations.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations (SDs), correlations between the variables, skewness, and kurtosis. PPC with PIS (r = 0.663) was found to be significant at 1%, and MAC with PPC (r = 0.770) was significant at 1%. Furthermore, PIS was correlated positively and significantly at 1% with PEW (r = 0.750). This study considered the sample normally distributed, since it ranged between ± 1.96 (Gravetter et al., 2016).

Table 2. Correlations (r), mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. MAC	5.205	1.417	(0.836)							
2. PCC	4.893	1.513	.770**	(0.862)						
3. PIS	5.201	1.314	.665**	.666**	(0.775)					
4. PEW	58.701	23.829	.585**	.750	.582**	(8.61)				
5. Gender	1.523	0.499	-.071	-.073	-0.91	.016	1			
6. Age	2.949	0.835	.025	-.073	.022	-.033	1.61*	1		
7. Tenure	3.081	1.513	-.141**	-1.39	-.166*	-.140*	2.46**	.337**	1	
8. Education	2.843	0.484	-0.068	-0.35	-0.038	-1.67*	-0.017	1.106	0.073	1.00
Skewness			-1.042	-.738	-1.038	-.453	—	—	—	—
Kurtosis			.362	-.185	.904	-.443	—	—	—	—

Note(s): Managerial caring (MAC); Psychological climate for caring (PCC); Perceived insider status (PIS); Positive employee well-being (PEW) **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

4.2 Common method variance

The effect of common method variance (CMV) may be a concern because all measures were self-reported. To ensure that CMV was eliminated or minimized, established recommendations were followed (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results yielded a CMV of 45.589%, which was less than the 50% cutoff. As a result, CMV was not a problem in the sample. Additionally, if the data suffered from collinearity, the results showed that the variance inflation factor (VIF) for all study indictors was less than 5, which is the threshold (Hair et al., 2021). Thus, this study concluded that this sample did not face any collinearity issues.

4.3 Assessment of the measurement model

Before conducting the hypotheses tests, this research investigated the measurement model as a critical assumption to investigate factor loading of items, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) of the variables, Cronbach's alpha, and the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3 shows that the items fell under their own constructs without any overlap between items. The AVE values for MAC, PCC, PIS, and PEW were greater than .50 (.699, .743, .601, and .741, respectively). Furthermore, the CR values were greater than .70 for MAC, PCC, PIS, and PEW (.918, .936, .893, and .920, respectively). HTMT values ranged between 0.641 and 0.834 and were below 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). Additionally, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was 0.077. Since the SRMR was below .080, it was considered an acceptable model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

4.4 Assessment of the structural model

According to the R-square adjusted value (R^2 =44%), variance in the dependent variable (PEW) was explained by MAC, PCC, and PIS. Furthermore, 60% of the variance in the first mediator (PCC) was explained by MAC, and 49% of the variance in the second mediator (PIS) was explained by MAC and PCC. To create the prediction model, Stone–Geisser's (Q^2) reports were made (PEW = .321, PCC = .595, and PIS = .460). All Stone–Geisser's Q^2 values were larger than 0, indicating that the model possessed predictive relevance.

Table 3. Measurement model

Construct	Item Code	Items Loading				CA	CR	AVE
		PEW	MAC	PCC	PIS			
Managerial Caring (MAC)	MAC1	0.849				0.914	0.918	0.699
	MAC2	0.854						
	MAC3	0.877						
	MAC4	0.782						
	MAC5	0.813						
	MAC6	0.836						
Psychological climate for caring (PCC)	PCC1		0.882			0.930	0.936	0.743
	PCC2		0.747					
	PCC3		0.849					
	PCC4		0.909					
	PCC5		0.895					
	PCC6		0.881					
Perceived insider status (PIS)	PIS1			0.858		0.868	0.893	0.601
	PIS2			0.866				
	PIS3			0.764				
	PIS4			0.778				
	PIS5			0.646				
	PIS6			0.717				
Positive employee well-being (PEW)	PEW1				0.872	0.913	0.920	0.741
	PEW2				0.878			
	PEW3				0.893			
	PEW4				0.862			
	PEW5				0.795			

Note: AVE, average variance extracted; CA, Cronbach's alpha; CR, composite reliability

4.5 Hypotheses tests

First, for first hypothesis was supported by the direct association between MAC and PEW, which is positive and significant (B = 0.320, t = 4.279, p < 0.001). Second, this study examined the relationship between MAC and PCC, which was found to be positive and significant (B = 0.777, t = 22.120, p < 0.001), thus supporting second hypothesis. Third, this study found that there was a significant and positive association between PIS and PEW (B = 0.388, t = 5.287, p < 0.001), which supports third Hypothesis. Fourth, the serial mediation hypothesis was supported by the positive and significant association between MAC and PEW (B = 0.545, t = 11.694, p < 0.000). Therefore, the indirect impact of MAC on PEW through PCC and PIS is positive and significant. Additionally, when PCC and PIS were added as serial mediators, the direct effect of MAC on PEW decreased from (B = 0.531, t = 7.986, p < 0.001) to (B = 0.320, t = 4.279, p < 0.001). Table 4 shows the results of the path coefficients (direct, indirect, and total effects).

Table 4. Path-coefficient results

Direct relationships	Beta	SD	t	p
MAC -> PEW	0.320	0.075	4.279	0.000
MAC -> PCC	0.777	0.035	22.120	0.000
PCC -> PIS	0.701	0.037	19.147	0.000
PIS -> PEW	0.388	0.073	5.287	0.000
Gender -> PEW	0.156	0.114	1.375	0.169
Age -> PEW	-0.045	0.065	0.685	0.493
Tenure -> PEW	-0.021	0.058	0.365	0.715
Education -> PEW	-0.119	0.065	1.829	0.068
Indirect relationships				
PCC -> PIS -> PEW	0.272	0.059	4.645	0.000
MAC -> PCC -> PIS	0.545	0.047	11.694	0.000
MAC -> PCC -> PIS -> PEW	0.212	0.049	4.356	0.000
Total effects				
MAC -> PEW	0.531	0.066	7.986	0.000
MAC -> PCC	0.777	0.035	22.120	0.000
MAC -> PIS	0.545	0.047	11.694	0.000
PCC -> PEW	0.272	0.059	4.645	0.000
PCC -> PIS	0.701	0.037	19.147	0.000
PIS -> PEW	0.388	0.073	5.287	0.000
Gender -> PEW	0.156	0.114	1.375	0.169
Age -> PEW	-0.045	0.065	0.685	0.493
Tenure -> PEW	-0.021	0.058	0.365	0.715
Education -> PEW	-0.119	0.065	1.829	0.068

Notes. MAC: managerial caring, PCC: psychological climate for caring, PIS: perceived insider status, PEW: positive employee well-being

Figure 2. Path-Coefficient results
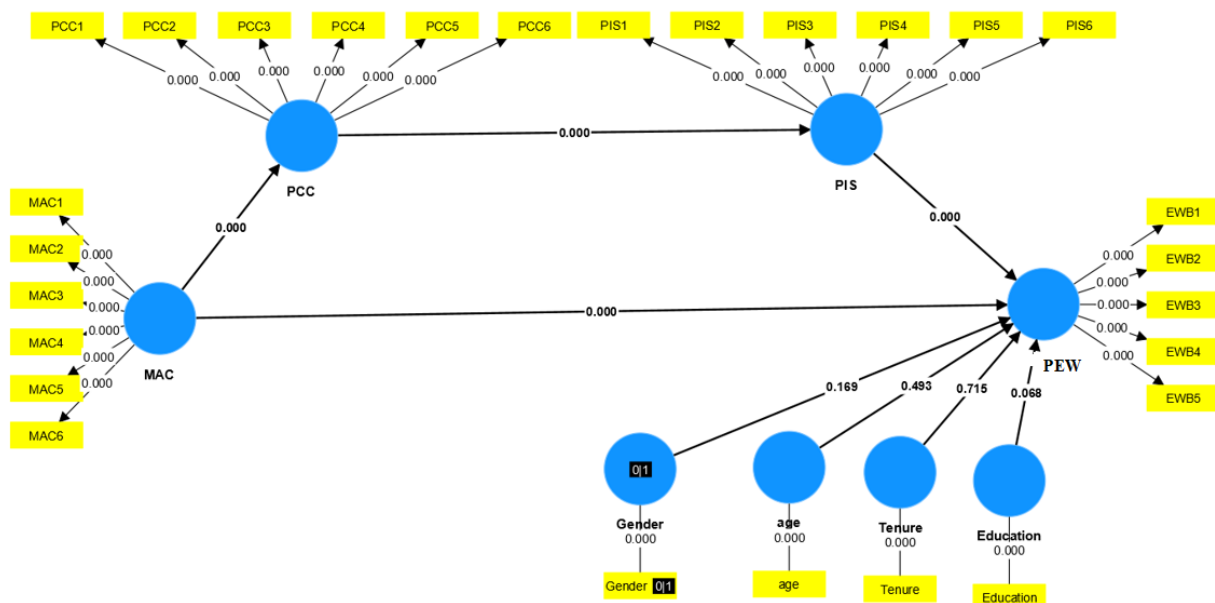
5. Discussion and conclusion

This study examined the relationship between MAC and PEW through the mechanism of the perceptions of PCC and insider status from the perceptions of insider status when applying SIT. This study found empirical support for the first hypothesis, which investigates the positive relationship between MAC and PEW. For example, this study found support for the relationship between organizational trust and PEW (Qin & Men, 2022). Participation in decision-making is considered one of the MAC roles, as they are expected to engage employees, which affects their well-being. Thus, this study result is consistent with the empirical study that found a positive and significant relationship between participation in decision-making and PEW (Uribetxebarria et al., 2021). Furthermore, as stated previously, MAC signals a caring climate to the employees, which will influence their perceptions of PCC. Thus, the current study is consistent with Fry et al. (2012) empirical study that a caring climate has a significant and positive effect on well-being.

For the second hypothesis, which investigates the positive relationship between MAC and PCC. This study found a positive and significant relationship between MAC and PCC. This study result is consistent with Saks' (2022) theorizing model: HR practices (participation in decision-making) have a significant effect on PCC. Additionally, ethical management (e.g. MAC) can greatly influence the trust employees have in an organization, which also affects the organizational climate (Agrawal, 2017). Additionally, in line with Sembiring et al., (2020), this study found that MAC—which includes fairness and compassion for employees—has a favorable impact on a caring climate.

For the third hypothesis, this study found a positive and significant relationship between PIS and PEW consistent with Yeh et al., (2022). Furthermore, staff members are likely to feel connected to managers and the organization, generating a sense of insider status (Liu et al., 2022). When the employee PIS, enhanced the relationship between the direct manager and employee, which is likely to enhance PEW. Furthermore, this study findings are consistent with other empirical studies that found a significant relationship between PIS and employee happiness and satisfaction (Choi et al., 2018; Having & Hollister, 2018; Yeh et al., 2022).

Lastly, this study found support for the fourth hypothesis investigating the serial mediation of PCC and PIS in the relationship between MAC and PEW. PIS mediates the relationship between PCC and PEW for the following studies that conceptualized PIS as a mediator between effective leadership and PEW (Adams et al., 2020), and between managerial coaching and PEW (Zhao & Liu, 2020). Furthermore, a recent empirical study found that managerial trustworthiness has an effect on engagement through the mediating role of PIS (Liu et al., 2022). This study argue that employees feel more like insiders if an organization spreads a climate of caring and the organizational manager has faith in them, treats them well, and involves them in the most critical decision-making processes that would positively enhance PEW. PCC is facilitated by trust, fairness, support, and caring about employees, and PIS encompasses the feeling of being an insider and having a place in the work. For example, the direct manager should apply a variety of strategies to influence employees at different levels and processes while continually sending out signals of care and concern about them.

5.1 Theoretical contribution

In reference to the research question, "Does MAC influence PEW when serially mediated by PCC and PIS?" the study findings contribute to SET, arguing specifically that when an organization directed by a manager fosters a positive climate of care that is facilitated by advanced levels of trust and quality social exchange between employer and employee, a caring climate for employees that enhances their PIS and overall PEW is created. This allows organizations to make

more job resources available (e.g., MAC), thus fostering PEW. Furthermore, PCC, such as being treated fairly by management, and PIS, such as feeling included in the organization, play a facilitating role in the relationship between MAC and PEW. Additionally, this study contributes to social identity theory by introducing new antecedents, such as MAC and PCC, and outcomes, such as PEW. Thus, SIT plays an intermediary role (e.g., through PCC and PIS) in explaining the relationship between MAC and PEW and answering the research question as to the mechanisms through which the relationship between MAC and PEW can be achieved.

The results of this study make some significant theoretical advances in this field. First, scholars and practitioners are paying more attention to PCC. Despite this, this phenomenon has remained understudied regarding UAE employees from various industries. This study enhanced and broadened the existing understanding of caring models in business management. The result was the creation of a new approach to establishing theoretical bases for directing the psychological environment toward caring. Given the importance of perceptions of insider status, managers must work hard to foster a culture in which employees are treated with respect and care so that they can feel as though they are insiders rather than outsiders. The results of this study also highlighted the importance of PIS in explaining how a caring organizational climate may influence employees' well-being. Put differently, this research offers new justifications for fostering a supportive and caring climate to facilitate an effective workplace. Enhancing personal PIS and fostering a caring climate are two efficient ways to change people's behaviors and promote PEW.

5.2 Empirical contributions

This research deepens the understanding of how perceptions of PCC and PIS might play intermediary roles in the relationship between PCC and PEW. The results indicated that management should develop and implement various tactics in the workplace that promote PEW. These strategies can be summarized as follows: Managers should be encouraged to prioritize the creation of an environment where employees feel cared for and trusted by their superiors. Additionally, managers should involve employees in decision-making processes, especially those concerning organizational improvements. For instance, a direct manager might hold monthly brainstorming sessions in which employees from different departments come together to share ideas for enhancing workplace processes and, as such, ensure that they know they are important and included in addressing organizational challenges. These steps would ultimately reflect positively on their well-being. Furthermore, managers should be approachable and responsive when employees need assistance. For example, when employees are struggling with a new project, managers should provide guidance and encouragement. Employees should be encouraged to communicate openly about their challenges or stress in their work contexts. Lastly, the significance of managers keeping their promises and commitments to employees should be emphasized because this builds trust between employees and employers, which will reflect positively on employee well-being. In this regard, senior management and other direct managers or supervisors should collaborate to achieve alignment, which will enable them to alter and promote an atmosphere of care that improves both employee PIS and well-being. Finally, managers in organizations should show their staff members compassion, respect, and trust, since these qualities can make them feel like insiders. Insiders should be periodically encouraged by HR practices, and, where appropriate, focused tracking observations should be made. This is due to the cognitive bias of insiders, which frequently enables them to commit to changing the status quo and actively pursue self-worth (Zhao & Liu, 2020).

In conclusion, based on SIT, this research contributes to the literature by examining perceptions of PPC and PIS that may affect employees' abilities to promote their well-being. The effects of PPC and PIS on PEW were investigated using regression. This research concludes that PEW can be enhanced through the managerial role and strengthening of subordinates by spreading PCC and augmenting PIS.

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

There are limitations to this study. First, because it might not accurately represent the target population, the nonprobability convenience sampling strategy used in this study could have suffered from sampling bias (Etikan et al., 2016). Second, because this was a cross-sectional study, the findings can be used only to describe the circumstances at the time the data were collected (Levin, 2006). Future research using time-series data and a probability sampling strategy can solve these problems. Third, the sample size was small. A larger sample size would result in a more representative sample that should be used to examine the proposed model and further validate the findings. Finally, the current study investigated the caring model at the individual level. Future studies may consider departmental or organizational levels.

The current findings may have the potential for future studies. First, PIS and PCC may act as multiple moderators or serial mediators in the association between knowledge sharing and innovative behavior. Second, it is important to learn more and identify some programs, such as feedback, coaching, and assistance programs, that have an impact on PIS, PCC, and well-being. It would be interesting to link HR practices or career development programs with

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Ethical Approval

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

Consent to participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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Appendix

A1. Managerial caring

1. My manager develops an atmosphere of caring and trust.
2. My manager ensures wide participation in decision about organization improvement.
3. When employees are struggling, my manager provides support for me.
4. In general, I believe my manager's motives and intentions are good.
5. I feel free to discuss work problems with my manager without fear of having it used against me later.
6. If my manager promised to do something, s/he would follow through.

A2. Perception of psychological climate for caring

1. Management truly cares about the employees;
2. Safety is a high priority in my workplace;
3. Employees feel respected at work;
4. Employees trust management;
5. Employees feel they are treated fairly;
6. Management helps me deal with stressful situations at work

A3. Perceived insider status

1. I feel very much a part of my work' organization
2. My work organization makes me believe that I am included
3. I feel like I am an 'outsider' at this organization (R)
4. I don't feel included in this organization (R)
5. I feel I am an 'insider' in my work organization
6. My work organization makes me frequently feel 'left-out' (R).

A4. Positive employee well-being

Over the past 2 weeks
1. ... I have felt cheerful and in good spirits
2. ... I have felt calm and relaxed

3. … I have felt active and vigorous
4. … I woke up feeling fresh and rested
5. … my daily life has been filled with things that interest me