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Article

Enhancing Innovative Work Behavior Through High-Performance Work Systems: The Influence of Psychological Well-Being and Organizational Justice

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to examine how High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) influence employees' innovative work behavior (IWB), with a focus on the mediating role of psychological well-being (PWB) and the moderating role of organizational justice (OJ). Specifically, this research aims to clarify the mechanisms and contextual factors through which HPWS enhances organizational innovation. To address these issues, this study employs a quantitative design using survey data collected from employees in South Korean firms. The data are analyzed using moderated mediation modeling with the SPSS PROCESS Macro, along with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to validate the constructs and bootstrapping procedures to test indirect effects. These analytical approaches enable a rigorous examination not only of the direct effects of HPWS on IWB, but also of the mediating role of PWB and the boundary condition of OJ. Theoretically, this study contributes to the HPWS literature by integrating employee well-being and justice perspectives into a moderated mediation framework. Practically, the findings suggest that managers and human resources (HR) professionals should not only adopt high-performance systems but also implement fair procedures and transparent reward systems to enhance employee well-being and foster innovation. This study provides actionable insights for organizations seeking to balance performance-driven practices with fairness and employee well-being to foster sustainable innovation.

Keywords: HPWS; innovative work behavior; psychological well-being; organizational justice
JEL: M12, M54, O32

1. Introduction

A growing body of research demonstrates that human resources are critical assets for organizational innovation, and managing systems of human resources (HR) is essential to a firm's capacity to innovate and perform well (Armstrong et al., 2010). When coherent bundles of HR practices consistently support knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing, and utilization, firms demonstrate stronger innovative performance through enhanced knowledge exchange and learning (Patel et al., 2013). Given a resource-based view (RBV), organizations can build a competitive advantage by systematically fostering knowledge, skills, and abilities (Barney and Mackey, 2016; Nyberg et al., 2014). Recent meta-reviews have extensively explored the complex causal mechanisms linking HR practices to organizational performance (Boon et al., 2019; Jiang and Messersmith, 2018). Yet, the precise mechanisms through which specific HR practices enhance work outcomes warrant further investigation, as prior studies have highlighted both direct and indirect pathways linking HR practices to innovation (Boon et al., 2019; Jiang and Messersmith, 2018; Sanz-Valle and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018). While previous studies such as Takeuchi et al. (2007) and Wood and de Menezes (2011) examined the mediating role of employee attitudes, few have investigated how psychological well-being and organizational justice jointly explain innovative behaviors in contemporary workplaces (e.g., post-pandemic digital HR settings; Heffernan and Dundon, 2016; Sanz-Valle and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018). Our study addresses this gap by integrating psychological resources and fairness perceptions into the High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS)–innovation link.

This study seeks to advance existing research on the relationship between HPWS and innovation by delving into employees' psychological states and perceptions, as employees are the direct beneficiaries of HR practices, such as training, performance evaluation, and reward systems. By uniting employees' attitudes and actions within a single framework, we aim to identify the mediating mechanism through which HPWS may influence organizational innovation. Our study contributes to the existing knowledge in three key ways. First, we examine the underlying mechanism through which HPWS impacts employees' innovativeness by focusing on their psychological well-being. Second, we investigate the unique moderating effect of organizational justice, a critical factor for organiza-

tional effectiveness, on the HPWS-innovation relationship. Third, we explore whether the mediating effect of psychological well-being between HPWS and innovative behaviors is influenced by perceptions of fairness in procedures and rewards.

The present study seeks to examine how high-performance work systems contribute to innovative performance. Specifically, it focuses on identifying the underlying pathway that explains this relationship. Drawing on the resource-based view (RBV) (Barney and Mackey, 2016) and social exchange theory (SET) (Cropanzano et al., 2007), we emphasize that HPWS not only builds organizational resources but also relies on employees' individual capacities to activate those resources. This micro-foundation perspective highlights how employees' *proactive personality*, *learning orientation*, and *psychological well-being* mediate and strengthen the conversion of HPWS inputs into innovative outcomes (Niu, 2022; Smothers et al., 2024). Such an integration of macro (HR systems) and micro (employee agency) factors deepens our understanding of why HPWS effects vary across contexts and individuals. Accordingly, we propose that a well-developed high-performance work system creates a work context that enhances employees' capabilities, motivation, and involvement in their roles. These conditions are expected to provide psychological and emotional resources that support employees' engagement in innovative behavior. The subsequent sections will elaborate on the literature review, hypotheses, methods, and findings.

2. Literature Review and Building Hypotheses

2.1 High-Performance Work Systems and Innovative Work

HPWS are generally conceptualized as an integrated set of human resource management practices designed to enhance employees' skills and motivation, thereby contributing to organizational effectiveness and sustained competitiveness (Boon et al., 2019; Guest, 2017; Jiang and Messersmith, 2018; Posthuma et al., 2013). An HPWS incorporates a long-term investment in workers and their selection and compensation. Although scholars have offered varying perspectives on the definition of high-performance work systems, HPWS is generally understood as an integrated set of human resource management practices. These practices are designed to develop employees' knowledge, skills, and work-related orientations, which represent key human capital resources supporting innovative behavior and organizational performance (Wright and Boswell, 2002). By strengthening these attributes, HPWS can provide employees with the psychological and emotional capacities necessary for innovation. However, it is important to note that the effects of HPWS are not universally positive. Prior studies indicate that when HR systems focus excessively on performance metrics, they may inadvertently increase stress and reduce motivation (Guest, 2017; Kroon et al., 2009). Fan et al. (2014) further found that employees in highly performance-oriented environments can experience emotional exhaustion and burnout if organizational support is insufficient. These findings highlight the dual nature of HPWS: While it enhances capability and motivation, it can also generate psychological strain when fairness and well-being mechanisms are lacking.

HPWS has garnered attention as a conducive system to promote organizational performance in multiple ways by emphasizing human resources as a competitive asset of organizations (Peccei and Van De Voorde, 2019). Prior studies on HPWS identified that it helps to strengthen the competitiveness of corporations, establish cooperative labor-management relations, and improve the quality of life (Kim, 2013; Rabl et al., 2014; Wright and Boswell, 2002). Moreover, in most studies, HPWS has been shown to enhance organizational performance by fostering employee skills and commitment (Boon et al., 2019; Evans and Davis, 2005; Fan et al., 2014; Guest, 2017; Guthrie et al., 2009). Nevertheless, some researchers note that when performance pressures are too high, HPWS may increase stress and reduce employee motivation (Guest, 2017; Kroon et al., 2009).

There have been many approaches to identifying the influences of HPWS on innovative work behavior (IWB). Prior studies suggest that HPWS provides the necessary structural and social resources that enable employees to engage in IWB. Without such organizational support, employees are less likely to invest in creativity or propose novel solutions (AlEssa and Durugbo, 2022). In addition, components of HPWS, such as the configuration of the employees' competency-appraisal system, exert a positive influence on employees' creativity and knowledge creation, ultimately leading to IWB (Kim, 2013). In addition, it was empirically verified that HPWS contributes to the formation of human resources that demonstrate a good organizational fit, which we define as the compatibility between employees' abilities, values, and needs and the organization's culture, demands, and environment. This perspective aligns with established research on Person–Job, Person–Organization, and Person–Environment fits, which emphasizes the multidimensional nature of alignment between individuals and their work contexts (Andela and van der Doef, 2019; Kristof-Brown and Guay, 2011).

More recent studies emphasize that HPWS can enhance both innovation and performance only when accompanied by fairness and employee support (Heffernan and Dundon, 2016; Jiang and Messersmith, 2018). Recent studies further unpack the HPWS–IWB mechanism by highlighting psychological empowerment, knowledge-based social processes, and the role of contextual contingencies (Arshad et al., 2024; Hassanah Husin et al., 2025; Li and Rasiah, 2025; Zhu et al., 2022). Furthermore, recent research highlights its critical role in digital transformation, remote work, and post-pandemic HR practices (Imran et al., 2021; Trenerry et al., 2021). Furthermore, drawing on the RBV and SET, we recognize that the relationship

between HPWS and innovative work behavior may be influenced by individual-level boundary conditions. Recent research suggests that employees' psychological states and personal traits—such as proactive personality and psychological readiness—play a critical role in converting organizational resources into innovative outcomes (Niu, 2022; Smothers et al., 2024). Accordingly, we argue that HPWS is most effective when employees actively leverage these resources through self-initiated behavior and reciprocal engagement. Thus, in this study, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1. HPWS positively influences employees' IWB.

2.2 High Performance Work Systems and Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being refers to individuals' recognition of their potential through the pursuit of life goals and self-development. Ryff (2013) distinguished psychological well-being from hedonistic conceptions of well-being, defining it as the pursuit of happiness through self-discovery as an authentic social being. In this sense, psychological well-being encompasses both employees' positive feelings toward life and their awareness of their own potential. Moreover, Andrews and Withey (2012) clarified psychological well-being in a broad sense, as subjective perception from personal experience. In a similar vein, the concept is defined by McDowell and Newell (1996) as the subjective happiness that a person perceives. Ryff (2013) further developed the concept of psychological well-being as the capacity to overcome life challenges, integrating its diverse definitions across dimensions such as autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, and positive relations with others.

Employees who experience psychological well-being tend to adapt more readily to diverse roles within the organization and buffer job stress by drawing on psychological and emotional resources (Wright and Boswell, 2002). Moreover, psychological well-being stems from an individual's positive responses to the surrounding environment, including organizational policies, supervisors, colleagues, and interactions with them. In other words, employees can attain psychological well-being by creating value in their work and being recognized or appreciated by others, as highlighted in value-based and motivation theories (Deci et al., 2017; Schwartz et al., 2012). Monnot and Beehr (2014) even disclosed that employees' supportive relationships with supervisors and colleagues can contribute to psychological well-being. Yet social support is not the sole determinant of well-being; it interacts with broader constructs such as psychological safety, which fosters open communication and trust (Edmondson and Lei, 2014; Edmondson, 2018; Newman et al., 2017). Moreover, social safety theory highlights that supportive environments buffer stress, while threats to fairness or belonging can undermine well-being (Slavich, 2020; Slavich et al., 2023). Thus, workplace relationships should be viewed as one component within a multidimensional framework of psychological well-being. This means that the social support from the work can help employees achieve psychological well-being.

Because HPWS incorporates the factors that facilitate the social support for employees' performance, it turns out that an HPWS has a positive association with psychological well-being. An HPWS's components, such as the training and evaluation systems, influence performance and its development in an organization (Van De Voorde and Beijer, 2015). In addition, an HPWS has a direct effect on attitudes, including job satisfaction or organizational involvement (Boon et al., 2019; Guest, 2017; Jiang et al., 2012; Posthuma et al., 2013). The reason that an HPWS positively influences employees' psychological well-being is presented by Wood and de Menezes (2011)'s study, where HPWS turned out to contribute to boosting psychological well-being by improving individuals' perspectives as well as stability. Furthermore, Fan et al. (2014) verified that an HPWS increases employees' subjective well-being and decreases burnout.

Recent research has demonstrated that HPWS practices, such as training, evaluation, and participation, significantly contribute to employee well-being (Fan et al., 2014; Wood and de Menezes, 2011). A recent study shows that HPWS enhances well-being, which in turn links to innovation outcomes (Sanz-Valle and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018). During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, flexible work design and participative decision-making emerged as critical factors for maintaining employee resilience and well-being (Aubouin-Bonnaventure et al., 2024; Kaufman et al., 2020). Recent evidence links HPWS to employees' health- and happiness-related well-being and suggests, consistent with a JD–R perspective, that contextual factors can determine whether HPWS functions as a resource or a strain (Ehrnrooth et al., 2023; Hanu and Khumalo, 2024; Shi et al., 2024). Thus, it can be hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2. An HPWS positively influences employees' psychological well-being.

2.3 Psychological Well-Being and Innovative Work Behavior

According to the broaden-and-build perspective (Sanz-Valle and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018), positive affective states enhance cognitive flexibility and exploratory behavior, which ultimately facilitates creativity and problem-solving. Moreover, positive emotion, including satisfaction, vitality, and joy, provides a ground for motivating employees to develop their competencies and try out creative solutions, ultimately leading to innovative and exploratory behaviors (Amabile and Pratt, 2016).

In addition to the broaden-and-build theory, the progress principle elaborates the positive relationship between being satisfied and working in an innovative way. That is, if the employees feel satisfied and happy, then they

tend to work more voluntarily and recognize their workplace in a positive way, so that their creativity increases (Amabile and Kramer, 2011). Moreover, Amabile and Kramer's (2011) 'progress principle' study, which analyzed daily work diaries from over 200 professionals, found that more than 75% of employees who experienced respect, appreciation, and support at work reported greater creativity and innovation through problem-solving and idea generation. This evidence underscores the role of positive emotions and supportive contexts in fostering innovation, providing a strong basis for Hypothesis 3, which posits that employees' psychological well-being is positively related to IWB.

Although positive emotion in previous studies cannot explicitly indicate psychological well-being by itself, given the similarity between positive emotion and psychological well-being, it can be assumed that psychological well-being also promotes IWB. In fact, numerous studies have emphasized the importance of establishing a system and environment that enhance employees' positive emotions and satisfaction, which in turn drive innovation (Amabile and Kramer, 2011; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The more frequently employees experience positive emotions at work sustain psychological well-being (Sanz-Valle and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018). Moreover, Hochschild's (1983) work on emotional labour highlights that emotions are central to organizational life, shaping both well-being and performance. Recent systematic reviews confirm that psychological well-being and psychological safety are crucial antecedents of innovative behavior (Edmondson, 2018; Newman et al., 2017; Slavich, 2020). These findings suggest that when employees experience well-being, they are more likely to engage in innovation and proactive behaviors. Thus, we can propose:

Hypothesis 3: Employees' psychological well-being is positively related to IWB.

2.4 Mediation of Psychological Well-Being

Despite growing interest in the influence of HPWS on IWB, the specific underlying mechanisms linking these two constructs remain a subject of ongoing scholarly investigation (Rehman et al., 2021; Sanz-Valle and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018). However, more recent studies have examined this issue, highlighting mediating processes such as psychological well-being, employee attitudes, and organizational climates in explaining the HPWS–IWB link (Heffernan and Dundon, 2016; Ogbonnaya and Messersmith, 2019; Sanz-Valle and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018). Hence, we need to explore the factors elaborating the mechanism of how HPWS relates to IWB. Extant research has established that psychological well-being serves as an antecedent to job performance (Edgar et al., 2015; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Even psychological well-being was mentioned as a factor positively influencing an organization's critical performance indexes, including job performance, job satisfaction, creativity, and resilience. Edgar et al. (2015) identified that positive emotion influences individuals' subjective performance. Overall, contrary to the traditional assumption that work accomplishments generate life satisfaction, empirical evidence indicates that psychological well-being functions as an antecedent to key outcomes, including job performance, creativity, and innovative work behavior (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

As aforementioned, from previous studies' findings, HPWS turned out to be positively associated with employees' attitudes, such as job satisfaction (Boon et al., 2019; Guest, 2017; Jiang et al., 2012; Posthuma et al., 2013), to improve employees' performance (Van De Voorde and Beijer, 2015), and to boost employees' well-being (Fan et al., 2014). Thus, it could be said that psychological well-being not only is the antecedent to employees' IWB but also explains the mechanism of how HPWS relates to IWB. That is, based on the prior literature on the positive association between psychological well-being and job performance (Wright and Boswell, 2002), and supported by subsequent studies linking psychological well-being to creativity, resilience, and innovative behaviors (Edgar et al., 2015; Heffernan and Dundon, 2016; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Sanz-Valle and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018). More recent work highlights that well-being serves as a mediating mechanism explaining how HR practices influence innovative outcomes, particularly in fair and supportive environments (Peccei and Van De Voorde, 2019). We can propose:

Hypothesis 4: Psychological well-being mediates the relationship between HPWS and IWB.

2.5 Moderation of Organizational Justice

Organizational justice refers to the extent to which employees perceive fairness in organizational policies, resource allocation, and decision-making processes (Colquitt and Zipay, 2015). It is conceptually grounded in Equity Theory (Cropanzano et al., 2007), which suggests that fairness is judged by comparing one's input–output ratio with that of others (Colquitt and Zipay, 2015). Subsequent research, however, has elaborated organizational justice into distinct dimensions—distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice—highlighting that fairness perceptions extend beyond equity of outcomes to include the processes and quality of treatment employees receive (Colquitt et al., 2013; Cropanzano et al., 2007). Moreover, extensive cross-cultural research emphasizes that fairness perceptions are significantly shaped by societal norms and specific organizational contexts (Li and Cropanzano, 2015; Shao et al., 2013). Therefore, organizational justice should be understood as a multidimensional and context-sensitive construct rather than a uniform perception of fairness. Specifically, collectivist cultures such as South Korea tend to emphasize relational harmony and equality of treatment, while individualist cultures place greater weight on procedural transparency and individual merit. These cul-

tural differences influence how employees interpret HPWS practices and perceive justice. Multinational organizations should therefore adapt HPWS implementation to align with local cultural norms and expectations.

Organizational justice consists of distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice has more to do with job-related variables, such as job satisfaction, whereas procedural justice has to do with organizational variables, because distributive justice is defined as the perception of fairness in terms of the distribution of rewards, whereas procedural justice is more concerned with the decision-making process in deciding on promotions or compensation, occurring at the organizational level (Cole and Flint, 2004).

Organizational justice is a contextual factor that explains job performance, including feeling satisfied about compensation. Moreover, employees' perception of the level of organizational justice exerts a big influence on individual and organizational performance (Lawler and Porter, 1967). A previous study on organizational justice verified the moderating effect of the concept on the relationship between the human-resource management policy and job performance as well as the association between HPWS and organizational involvement (Chang, 2015).

Drawing on the prior literature, we take an extended view of the effect of organizational justice and aim to identify its role as a moderator between HPWS and psychological well-being. As previously mentioned, if individuals think they are treated fairly within their organization, they will be more likely to immerse themselves in the HPWS more, which in turn increases the positive effect of HPWS on psychological well-being. Otherwise, they will feel less satisfied with life, and so their psychological well-being will be decreased. Recent studies confirm that fairness perceptions amplify the effects of HPWS by strengthening employee commitment and resilience (Heffernan and Dundon, 2016; Kuvaas et al., 2020). This suggests that organizational justice is a crucial condition for maximizing HPWS outcomes. Thus, we hypothesized:

Hypothesis 5: Organizational justice moderates the relationship between HPWS and psychological well-being.

2.6 Moderated Mediation of Organizational Justice

Although substantial scholarly attention has been paid to the effects of HPWS on various employee and organizational outcomes, relatively limited attention has been given to moderated mediation mechanisms through which HPWS influences employee behavior. Related research in organizational change has shown that leadership, justice perceptions, and affective commitment to change can jointly shape employees' supportive responses to change. For example, Bakari, Hunjra, and Niazi (2017) examined how authentic leadership influences planned organizational change through employees' perceptions, while Soenen and Melkonian (2017) found that organizational identification mediates the relationship between justice-related judgments and affective commitment to change in the context of mergers and acquisitions.

Hypothesis 6: Employees' psychological well-being mediates the influence of HPWS on IWB depending on the perceived level of organizational justice.

Therefore, a research model as shown in Fig. 1 was set up to reveal how the mediating effect of Psychological Well-being will be controlled by organizational justice in the relationship between HPWS and IWB.

3. Methods

3.1 Data Collection and Sample

The data were collected from large for-profit companies in South Korea that actively adopt HPWS. To ensure diversity, participants were drawn from both manufacturing and service industries, and firms varied in size from mid-sized enterprises to large corporations. Prior to participation, employees were informed of the study's purpose and assured that their responses would remain confidential and that participation was entirely voluntary. Data were collected using both paper-based questionnaires and an online survey format.

A total of 311 questionnaires were distributed, yielding 306 valid responses (69% response rate). We applied clear data-cleaning criteria to ensure data quality: responses with more than 20% missing items, internally inconsistent patterns, or straight-line answers were excluded. After applying these criteria, 55 cases were removed, resulting in a final usable sample of 251 participants. Comparisons of excluded and retained cases on demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, education) did not reveal significant systematic bias. Of the 251 respondents, 56.9% were male, a majority were in their 30s (62.7%), and 62.9% held a bachelor's degree. The average tenure was 7.2 years, ranging from 1 to 24 years. These characteristics are broadly consistent with the demographics of employees in South Korean corporations, though generalizability beyond this context should be interpreted cautiously.

3.2 Measures

All constructs were measured with established scales on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The original English instruments were translated into Korean and back-translated by bilingual experts to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence. A pilot test was conducted with HR managers to refine clarity and wording. Because all data were self-reported, common method bias (CMB) was carefully assessed. Procedural remedies included ensuring anonymity, varying item formats, and separating predictors and outcomes in the survey. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test indicated that no single factor accounted for the majority of variance (<40%). In addition, a common latent factor approach in confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed discriminant validity

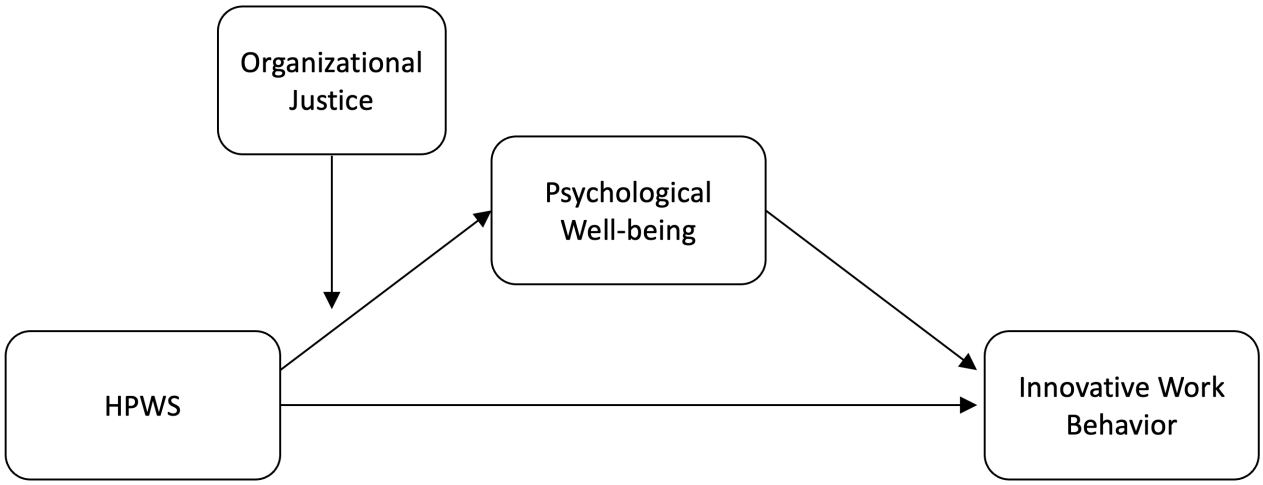

Fig. 1. Research model. HPWS, High-Performance Work Systems.

among constructs. These results suggest that CMB was not a serious concern in this study.

HPWS were assessed using a 27-item scale originally developed by Sun et al. (2007). This instrument has been widely applied in prior research and has demonstrated robust psychometric properties across different organizational contexts (Patel et al., 2013; Posthuma et al., 2013). The scale captures multiple dimensions of HR practices, including selective staffing, extensive training, internal mobility, employment security, broad job design, results-oriented appraisal, rewards, and employee participation. These dimensions were aggregated to reflect employees' overall perceptions of HPWS, with higher scores indicating a more intensive organizational investment in human resource practices. Although prior studies have reported mixed findings regarding HPWS outcomes, moderate to strong intercorrelations among the constituent practices have been consistently observed (e.g., Takeuchi et al., 2007). Following this approach, we combined the individual practice measures into a single composite index representing HPWS. To assess the construct validity of HPWS, we conducted a series of CFAs for each HR practice dimension. The results showed that the one-factor models for all practices demonstrated acceptable model fit (χ^2/df = 5.59, Comparative Fit Index [CFI] = 0.91, Incremental Fit Index [IFI] = 0.90, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA] = 0.07). In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) for the six-factor model was 0.52, while the composite reliability (CR) reached 0.77. The internal consistency reliability of the overall HPWS measure was satisfactory (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.74$).

psychological well-being (PWB) was assessed using a 19-item instrument based on Ryff's (2013) multidimensional framework of well-being. The scale captures six core facets of psychological functioning, including autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and self-acceptance. Participants responded to the items by indicating the extent to which each statement reflected their experiences, with higher scores representing greater levels of psychological well-being. An example item is "I possess a positive attitude toward myself". CFA indicated an acceptable, albeit marginal, model fit (χ^2/df = 4.23, CFI = 0.98, Tucker–Lewis Index [TLI] = 0.97, IFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.03, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual [SRMR] = 0.02). All observed indicators loaded strongly on the latent construct, with factor loadings exceeding 0.70, except for one item (0.57). In addition, the AVE was 0.64, and the CR reached 0.90, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. The overall internal consistency of the PWB scale was acceptable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.79$).

Organizational justice (OJ) was operationalized using a scale comprising two distinct dimensions: distributive justice and procedural justice. The distributive justice dimension captures employees' evaluations of the fairness of outcome allocations, whereas procedural justice reflects perceptions of fairness in the processes through which decisions are made. A representative item for distributive justice is "How fair has your company been in rewarding you when you consider the amount of effort that you put into your work"? For procedural justice, an example item is "I am able to appeal the outcome arrived at by those procedures". To examine the measurement structure of organizational justice, we conducted a first-order CFA. The results indicated an acceptable model fit (χ^2/df = 1.42, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99, IFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.01, and SRMR = 0.01). All observed indicators loaded strongly on their respective latent factors, with factor loadings exceeding 0.70. Furthermore, the AVE was 0.54, and the CR reached 0.82, supporting adequate convergent validity. The internal consistency of the overall OJ scale was also satisfactory (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$).

IWB was measured using Luke's and Stephan's (2017) nine-item scale designed to capture employees' innovative activities in the workplace. The instrument assesses how frequently respondents engage in behaviors associated with different stages of the innovation process. Specifically, the items reflect activities related to generating novel ideas for challenging work-related problems, promoting these ideas by gaining support from others, and implementing innovative ideas into practical and useful applications. Higher scores indicate more frequent engagement in innovative work behavior. To evaluate the measurement properties of the IWB scale, we conducted a first-order CFA. The results indicated an acceptable, though marginal, model fit (χ^2/df = 1.13, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99, IFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.02, and SRMR = 0.01). Most observed indicators loaded strongly on the latent construct, with standardized factor loadings exceeding 0.70, except for two items (0.66 and 0.57). In addition, the AVE was 0.65, and the CR reached 0.86, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. The internal consistency reliability of the IWB measure was acceptable (Cronbach's α = 0.77).

3.3 Data Analysis

We used a two-phased moderated-mediation process analysis in SPSS 23 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA, Hayes, 2022). In the first step, we tested basic assumptions for overall data analyses in terms of normal distribution and general descriptive statistics, including validity/reliability tests and measurement model assessment. In the second phase of data analysis, we investigated the interactive direct and indirect effects of an independent variable on a dependent variable via a mediator depending on a moderator (Hayes, 2022). Bootstrap resampling (5000 samples) was used to assess the significance of indirect effects, with bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals reported. Interaction terms were plotted to visualize. Table 1 presents the scale reliabilities, means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among all study variables. The results indicate moderate to strong correlations among the key independent variables. Specifically, HPWS is positively and significantly associated with innovative behavior (r = 0.54) and PWB (r = 0.47), and PWB is also significantly correlated with innovative behavior (r = 0.56). To assess the potential impact of multicollinearity, variance inflation factors (VIFs) were examined for all regression models. All VIF values were below 4, suggesting that multicollinearity is unlikely to pose a serious concern in the present study.

4. Results

4.1 Preliminary Analysis

To establish the discriminant validity of our measures, we conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses. As an initial step, we estimated an overall measurement model to examine the factor structure of the key constructs. In this model, distributive and procedural justice were specified as indicators of organizational justice, while the indicators of HPWS and PWB were assigned to their respective latent factors. We assessed model fit using five fit indices (Hair et al., 2009). The results indicated that the four-factor model had good fit indices (χ^2 = 157.346, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95, IFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.04), despite a slightly elevated χ^2/df value, which is known to be more sensitive to large sample sizes (Hair et al., 2009). This suggests an acceptable model fit. In the next step, the full measurement model was evaluated against a set of alternative model specifications. Specifically, four competing models were estimated for comparison. The first alternative model combined PWB and OJ into a single factor (model A). However, the fit statistics showed a significant decrease in model fit, supporting the distinctiveness and construct validity of both measures. Models B, C, and D tested alternative combinations of factors but none of them provided a better fit than the full model, affirming the distinct nature of the variables.

Convergent validity was evaluated in accordance with the criteria proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), using composite reliability and AVE as key indicators. The AVE values for high-performance work systems (HPWS; 0.52), PWB (0.64), and OJ (0.54) were close to or exceeded the commonly recommended benchmark of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2009). In addition, discriminant validity was supported because, for each pair of constructs, the AVE estimates were greater than the corresponding squared inter-construct correlations, consistent with Fornell and Larcker's guidelines. The composite reliability values further indicated satisfactory internal consistency for HPWS (0.77), PWB (0.90), and innovative work behavior (IWB; 0.86). Taken together, these results provide evidence for the construct validity of the study measures. Accordingly, the five-item measure of well-being was retained for use in the subsequent analyses.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses 1 through 4 were examined using hierarchical multiple regression analyses, whereas Hypothesis 5 was tested with hierarchical moderated regression. Across all models, gender, age, education level, and years of work experience were included as control variables in the initial step. Mediation effects were subsequently assessed by following the analytical procedure proposed by Hayes (2022). Results in Table 2 show that HPWS is positively and significantly related to IWB, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1, and meeting the first condition for mediation. That is, in a well-equipped High-Performance Work System, it can be seen to have a positive impact on employees' innovation behavior, a leading variable that positively influences organizational performance. As shown in Table 2, HPWS was positively and significantly associated with PWB, and PWB was, in turn, significantly related to IWB. These results provide support for Hypotheses 2 and 3 and satisfy the initial requirements for testing a mediating relationship. To further examine mediation, both HPWS and PWB were en-

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities.

Variables	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Gender	0.57	0.49	-							
2. Age	2.76	0.59	0.08	-						
3. Education	3.12	0.65	–0.02	0.19**	-					
4. Tenure	0.69	0.46	0.05	–0.06	0.10	-				
5. HPWS	3.21	0.49	0.03	0.07	–0.01	0.02	(0.74)			
6. IWB	3.29	0.62	0.14*	0.08	0.15*	0.01	0.54**	(0.77)		
7. PWB	3.77	0.42	0.05	0.04	0.08	0.02	0.47**	0.56**	(0.79)	
8. OJ	3.11	0.64	0.12	–0.01	0.04	–0.06	0.42**	0.34**	0.29**	(0.78)

Note. n = 251, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; Cronbach's alphas are in parentheses. M, mean; SD, standard deviation; IWB, innovative work behavior; PWB, psychological well-being; OJ, organizational justice.

Table 2. Regression results for mediating effect of PWB.

	Model 1 (DV: IWB)		Model 2 (DV: PWB)		Model 3 (DV: IWB)	
	β	*t*	β	*t*	β	*t*
Gender	0.14	2.52*	0.04	0.71	0.12	2.43*
Age	–0.01	–0.23	–0.01	–0.14	–0.01	–0.18
Education	0.19	3.43**	0.11	1.90*	0.15	2.89**
Tenure	0.00	0.00	–0.00	–0.03	0.00	0.01
HPWS	0.52	9.35**	0.48	7.91**	0.35	6.04**
PWB					0.36	6.51**
R2	0.37		0.25		0.46	
F	10.55**		6.05**		14.52**	

Note. n = 251, ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. DV, dependent variable.

tered simultaneously into Model 3. The results indicated that the direct effect of HPWS on IWB decreased in magnitude, whereas PWB remained a significant predictor of IWB (β = 0.36), suggesting a full mediation effect. This interpretation was further supported by Sobel's test, which confirmed that the indirect effect of HPWS on IWB through PWB was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Accordingly, Hypothesis 4 was supported. Taken together, these findings indicate that HPWS influences employees' innovative work behavior indirectly by enhancing their psychological well-being.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that OJ moderates the relationship between HPWS and PWB. In addition, we examined a conditional process model in which the indirect effect of HPWS on IWB through PWB varies as a function of OJ (Hypothesis 6). The results of the hierarchical moderated regression analysis are presented in Table 3. As shown, the interaction term between HPWS and OJ was statistically significant in predicting PWB, indicating the presence of a moderation effect. Specifically, the positive association between HPWS and PWB was stronger when employees perceived higher levels of organizational justice. This interaction pattern is illustrated in Fig. 2.

To further evaluate the moderated mediation effect proposed in Hypothesis 6, we examined whether the indirect effect of HPWS on IWB through PWB varied across

Table 3. Moderation of OJ on HPWS to PWB.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	*t*	β	*t*	β	*t*
Gender	0.06	0.91	0.01	0.19	0.01	0.08
Age	0.01	0.16	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.03
Education	0.12	1.56	0.12	1.99*	0.11	1.93*
Tenure	0.10	0.06	0.01	0.11	–0.00	–0.13
HPWS			0.30	4.18**	0.30	4.32**
OJ			0.23	3.32**	0.18	2.56**
HPWS × OJ					0.20	3.28**
R2	0.05		0.24		0.27	
F	1.07		5.26**		5.84**	

Note. n = 251, ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

different levels of OJ. Specifically, conditional indirect effects were estimated at high and low levels of OJ, defined as one standard deviation above and below the mean. Bootstrapping procedures with 5000 resamples were employed to generate confidence intervals for the conditional indirect effects. The results, reported in Table 4, indicate that the indirect relationship between HPWS and IWB via PWB was contingent on levels of organizational justice. As shown, the positive association between HPWS and PWB was stronger when employees perceived higher levels of organizational justice, resulting in a larger indirect effect on

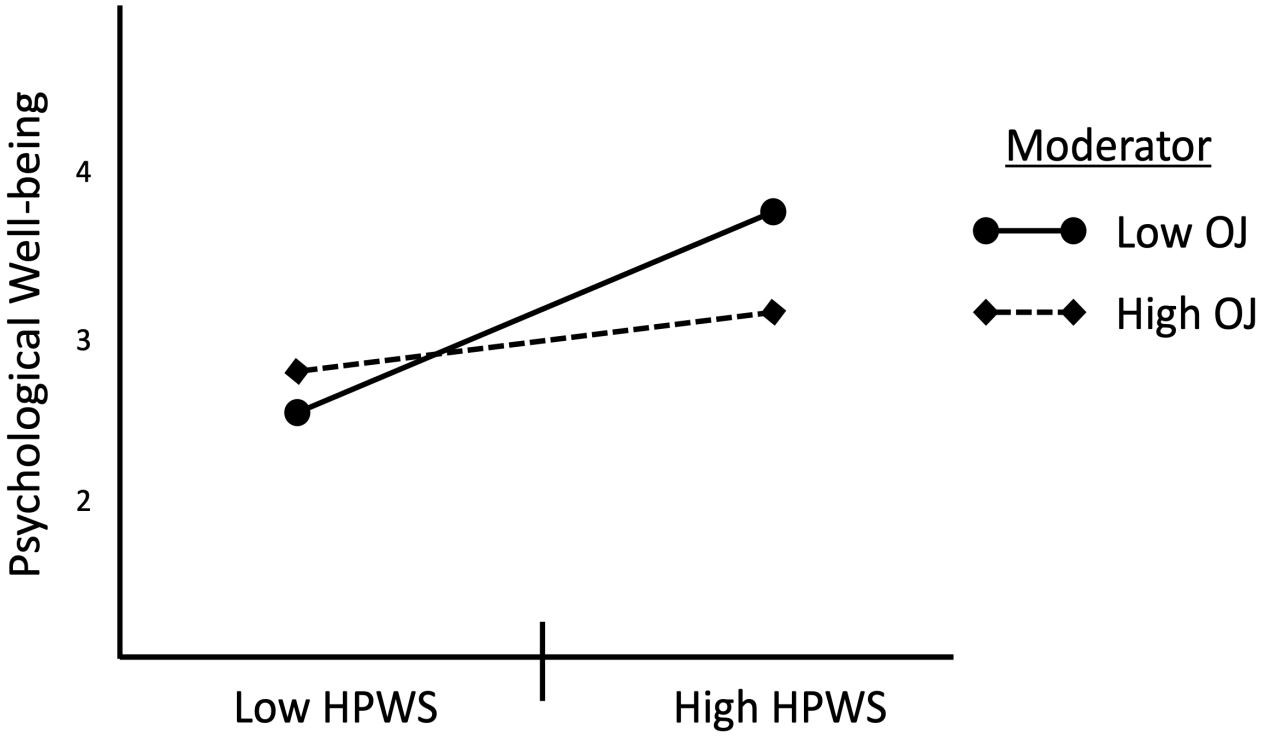

Fig. 2. Moderating effect of OJ on the relationship between HPWS and PWB.

Table 4. SPSS process adjustment mediation effect verification.

DV: IWB				
OJ	Boot indirect effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
-1 SD (–0.5498)	0.1150**	0.0554	0.0037	0.2261
M	0.1578**	0.0426	0.0845	0.2529
+1 SD (0.5498)	0.2006**	0.0423	0.1269	0.2949
Index of Moderated Mediation				
PWB	Index	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
	0.0779*	0.0450	0.0135	0.1979

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, boot LLCI = boot indirect effect 95% lower limit value, boot ULCI = boot indirect effect 95% lower limit value, bootstrap sample size = 5000.

innovative work behavior. This pattern of conditional indirect effects is illustrated in Fig. 3, which demonstrates that the indirect effect increased as the level of OJ increased.

In sum, all the hypotheses were supported. These findings showed the mechanism of how PWB leads to IWB and indicated that PWB was moderated by the interaction term of HPWS and OJ; then the moderated PWB mediated the relationship between HPWS and IWB.

5. Discussion

The overall aim of this study was to test plausible relationships between HPWS as a structure of HR practices, procedural and distributive forms of organizational justice, employees' emotional well-being, and their innovative work behavior in the workplace. HPWS has been shown to be an important predictor of most employee outcomes (Van De Voorde and Beijer, 2015), but little has been reported on emotional well-being, even though emotions in organizations have gained importance. Furthermore, considering the critical role of high-performance HR practices in modern organizational effectiveness (Rehman et al., 2021) and the profound impact of emotional states on employee work behaviors (Ashkanasy and Dorris, 2017), this study proposes a mediation model to clarify these intricate linkages. Organizational justice perceived by employees is also relevant to understanding performance-driven behaviors (Colquitt and Rodell, 2011). In this paper, based on the reasons above, we argue the need to integrate innovative behavior, justice, and psychological well-being in high-performing work practices.

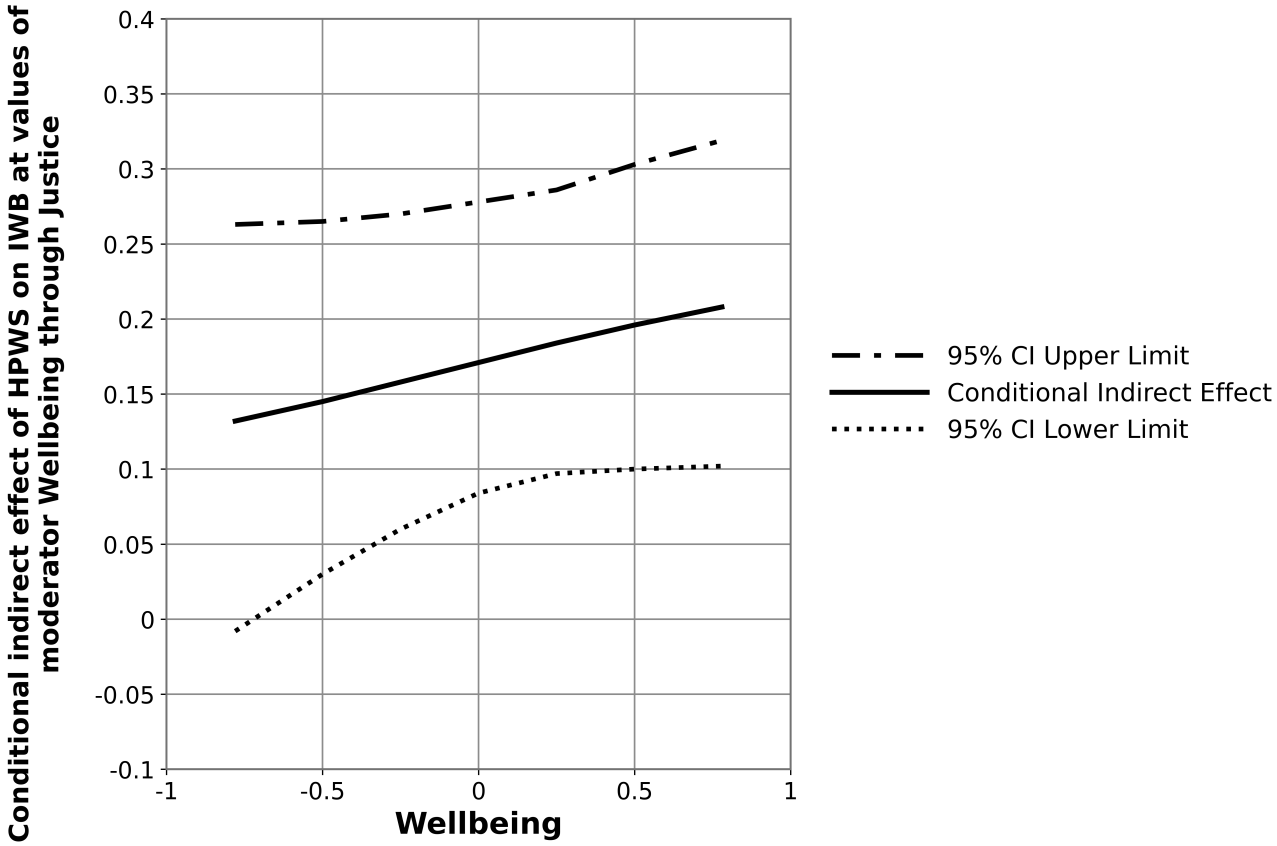

Fig. 3. Conditional effect of HPWS on IWB at values of the moderator OJ.

First, human resources developed through HR practices are a key asset to an organization's sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations developed based on HPWS may achieve better labor productivity and employee outcomes (Lawler, 1992). The results of this study support Hypotheses 1 and 2, in that employees' innovative work behavior and psychological well-being are associated with a set of HR practices designated as high-performance work systems, perhaps because HPWS has been shown to be a direct correlate of employees' various outcomes (Guthrie et al., 2009). Importantly, the explanatory power of HPWS was notable: HPWS accounted for 37% of the variance in IWB, and the mediation analysis showed that psychological well-being explained a substantial portion of the HPWS–IWB link ($\beta = 0.36$). These results indicate not only statistical significance but also practical importance, suggesting that well-designed HR practices make a meaningful difference in employees' innovative contributions.

Second, organizational justice is a critical theoretical framework largely neglected in HR research (Foster, 2010). The theoretical framework of organizational justice in assessing employee positive attitudes is particularly related to employees' well-being in the workplace. This suggests that the relationship between HR practices and employee outcomes is both direct and unconditional, and, in reality, is mediated in multiple directions. Evidence from this study indicated that employees differentiate between HR practices and rewards in terms of organizational fairness. This distinction is important when examining the mediating effect of employee well-being on employees' behavior in organizations, because the psychological aspects had the strongest mediating effect. Beyond organizational systems, our findings also suggest that HPWS effectiveness depends on how employees interpret and engage with those practices. Integrating individual differences—such as proactive personality or psychological readiness—into the RBV–SET framework helps explain variation in innovative responses across employees. This extension responds directly to recent calls for examining boundary conditions of HR systems (Smothers et al., 2024) and clarifies how HPWS can translate into innovation through employee agency.

On the other hand, the mediating role of psychological well-being was intensified as a function of the perceived level of justice. In other words, in terms of the degree of organizational justice, this alters the mediating role of perceived well-being between HPWS and employees' innovative work behavior. These specific findings suggest that respondents reporting intense perceptions of HPWS were more likely to perceive psychological well-being as mediating the relationship between HPWS and innovative behavior. That is, those who reported higher levels of HPWS may denote a stronger relational psychologi-

cal contract and hence may improve their perception of the outcomes (Guthrie et al., 2009). In practice, organizations should therefore adopt participative decision-making, ensure fair promotions and evaluations, and provide flexible work arrangements to create an environment where HPWS is interpreted positively by employees. Such practices are particularly relevant in the post-pandemic context, where fairness and resilience are central to sustaining innovation.

Last, organizational justice interacts to explain psychological well-being over and above its single contribution (Hypothesis 5). That is, organizational justice had a stronger effect on the mediating role of psychological well-being on the relationship between HPWS and employees' innovative work behavior. As in previous studies (e.g., Wu and Charturvedi, 2009), we did find an interaction, and in turn interactional justice exerted a strong mediating effect of PWB on the relationship between HPWS and IWB over and above that of organizational justice. When people value their relationships with others (Lind and Tyler, 1988), they are more likely to feel a sense of self-worth and well-being, which in turn creates faith in just organizational procedures because of the effect of trust (Colquitt and Rodell, 2011). This implies that organizations aiming to maximize the benefits of HPWS should design HR systems that are not only high-performing but also fair and transparent, thereby reinforcing both employee trust and innovative output.

5.1 Practical Implications of This Study

There are several practical implications that emerge from this study. First, the findings support a growing body of work emphasizing that a positive and fair working environment is critical for enhancing employee outcomes. In practice, managers and HR professionals can implement HPWS in ways that reinforce fairness and organizational justice. For example, organizations can introduce participative decision-making forums in which employees are actively involved in work design and process improvement. Such participation enhances a sense of ownership and stimulates innovative thinking. In addition, structured feedback systems that ensure timely and respectful communication during performance evaluation can strengthen trust and transparency. A well-known illustration is Google's "Project Aristotle", which demonstrated that open feedback and psychological safety significantly improved team innovation.

Second, specific interventions may include participative decision-making forums, where employees are invited to contribute to work design or process improvement; structured feedback systems that provide timely and respectful communication; and fair workload allocation practices that prevent perceptions of inequity. These interventions not only maintain fairness but also strengthen the psychological contract between the organization and its members, thereby motivating employees to engage in innovative work behaviors. However, it is important to recognize that psychological contracts are subjective and may not always be mutually shared. Unmet or misaligned expectations can lead to employee frustration or disengagement; therefore, organizations should manage such implicit expectations carefully while promoting open communication.

Third, sector-specific considerations are noteworthy. In our Korean sample, manufacturing firms often emphasized skill development and safety-related fairness concerns, while service-sector organizations highlighted interpersonal justice through respectful treatment and transparent communication with employees. Such variations suggest that while fairness is a universal principle, its implementation should be context-sensitive to sectoral dynamics.

Finally, as Takeuchi et al. (2007) recommend, strategic HR partners should integrate psychological well-being into organizational strategy. By adopting fair and just systems across training, evaluation, and rewards, organizations can foster employee well-being, build trust, and sustain innovative performance.

5.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

This study has several limitations and recommendations for future studies. First, it is a cross-sectional study; so causality between the predictor, mediator, and moderator cannot be deduced. Therefore, the hypothetical pathways among them do not guarantee different effects over time. We recommend that future research should include longitudinal data using multiple data sources to explore causal relationships between HPWS, OJ, PWB and IWB.

Second, the sample consisted only of South Korean companies adopting HPWS, which may limit generalizability. Justice perceptions and cultural values differ across countries, and results may vary in other contexts. Third, all data were self-reported, raising concerns of common method bias, though statistical tests suggested this was not severe. Finally, the sample was drawn primarily from mid- to large-sized enterprises, meaning that findings may not fully apply to smaller firms or public organizations.

Future research should therefore adopt longitudinal and experimental designs, conduct cross-national comparisons, and investigate sector-specific differences. Moreover, examining how emerging factors—such as digital HR systems, ESG-related HR practices, or leadership styles—interact with HPWS would provide richer insights into the boundary conditions of these relationships.

6. Conclusions

This study sheds light on the integral role that HPWS plays in influencing innovative work behavior through a framework of psychological well-being and organizational justice. By leveraging resource-based theory (Wernerfelt, 1984), we illustrate the strategic importance of HPWS in developing human capital that fosters organizational innovation and competitive advantage. Our findings validate the mediating role of psychological well-being in the HPWS-

innovation relationship. Employees who perceive high psychological well-being are more inclined to engage in innovative activities, which enhance organizational success (Sanz-Valle and Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018). This highlights the need for organizations to create supportive environments that nurture employee well-being alongside implementing HPWS.

Moreover, the moderating effect of organizational justice on this relationship underscores the necessity for fair practices in enhancing employee perceptions and outcomes. When employees perceive fairness in distribution and procedures, the positive impacts of HPWS on their psychological well-being and innovative behavior are significantly strengthened (Colquitt and Zipay, 2015). Therefore, ensuring organizational justice is crucial for maximizing the efficacy of HPWS and fostering a culture of innovation.

Practically, HR practitioners should focus on initiatives that promote both psychological well-being and fairness within organizational structures. By implementing transparent decision-making, equitable reward systems, and consistent communication, organizations can enhance employee motivation and engagement, which in turn boosts innovation (Colquitt and Rodell, 2011). Moreover, fostering a clear understanding of reciprocal roles and expectations between management and employees can reinforce the psychological contract and encourage innovative behaviors. In conclusion, integrating strategic HR practices with a focus on fairness and well-being not only strengthens employee innovation (Amabile and Kramer, 2011) but also enriches organizational performance outcomes, providing a robust pathway for achieving long-term competitive success (Barney and Mackey, 2016).

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets analyzed for this study are not publicly available due to confidentiality protections and restrictions associated with the informed consent process, but may be available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Author Contributions

DY and CH contributed to the conception and design of the study. JC organized the database and performed the statistical analysis, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors contributed to editorial changes in the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. All authors have participated sufficiently in the work and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The study used an anonymous questionnaire and did not collect personally identifiable information. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed about the study purpose, confidentiality protections, anonymity of responses, and their right to discontinue participation. Because the study involved anonymous survey data and posed no more than minimal risk, formal ethical approval was not required in South Korea. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality protections, and their right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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