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Navigating human environment interaction in workplace dynamics for sustainable employee wellbeing: the role of organizational injustice, cynicism, and innovation in climate-adaptive organizations

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Introduction: This study examines the impact of human–environment interaction within organizational settings on sustainable employee well-being. It particularly focuses on how organizational injustice and cynicism hinder employee outcomes, and explores the potential of innovative culture and employee innovative behavior as mitigating and moderating factors, respectively.

Methods: A total of 300 employees from climate-adaptive manufacturing firms in Beijing were surveyed. The study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test both direct and indirect relationships among key constructs including organizational injustice, cynicism, innovative culture, employee innovative behavior, and employee well-being.

Results: Findings reveal that innovative culture significantly contributes to employee well-being and mediates the negative effects of organizational injustice and cynicism. Additionally, employees' innovative behavior positively moderates the relationship between organizational stressors and well-being, reflecting the role of innovation in enhancing employee resilience.

Discussion: The results highlight the importance of fostering a fair, innovation-driven organizational environment to promote psychological sustainability and well-being.

KEYWORDS

manufacturing firms, structural equation modeling, organizational injustice, organizational cynicism, employee wellbeing innovative culture, employees' innovative behavior

1 Introduction

Modern organizations have turned innovation into a cardinal pillar, as competition in the fast-moving global market demands ongoing creativity and adaptation. According to the Theory of Innovation, organizational success depends to a great extent on the ability to create, execute, and maintain innovative practices (Ahmed A. K. et al., 2024). The theory suggests that the process of innovation is not only determined by technological advances but also by

the organizational culture, employee behaviors, and the work environment (Iqbal et al., 2025). Consequently, employee wellbeing dynamics have been increasingly highlighted in organizational research since they are significant to the development of creativity and individual performance (Wai et al., 2024).

The research problem emerges from the dual challenge faced by modern organizations: We create an environment of encouragement and fairness at work, as well as innovation (Zhanbayev et al., 2023). Given the need for innovation for organizational survival in today's globally competitive landscape, innovation can be stressful, and stressors can be bad for employee wellbeing. The paradox that is to be found here is to be fair, and trustworthy and support others in the workplace without disintegrating the drive for innovation (Ajmal et al., 2024). If this balance is not attained, there will be serious consequences such as employee burnout, employee turnover, and organizational performance.

In a modern fast-paced work environment, employees' mental and physical health are key factors in their productivity and engagement. This study contributes to this emerging body of literature by examining the complex relationships among diverse organizational and individual factors that affect employee wellbeing. In particular, researchers investigate the functions of employees' innovative behavior, organizational cynicism, organizational injustice, and innovative culture, and their interrelations and implications as a means of building a conducive work atmosphere (Khan et al., 2025). Since these factors have been shown to influence wellbeing, they were chosen for analysis, however, the connections between them are not well understood, which provides an opportunity for a more holistic analysis of employee wellbeing within innovative organizations (Wenying et al., 2024).

Physical health, psychological satisfaction, and social connectedness in the workplace are all part of employee wellbeing (Gorgenyi-Hegyes et al., 2021). As human capital development becomes a strategic imperative for most organizations to secure and maintain competitive advantage, organizations are taking notice. Innovative behavior of employees (defined as the willingness and ability to conceptualize, promote, and implement new ideas) is a major determinant of wellbeing (Karimi et al., 2023). When employees participate in innovative activities, they become engaged which contributes to a sense of meaning around their work and gives them a feeling of control and accomplishment which collectively benefit their wellbeing. Though individual attributes are key to the realization of these positive outcomes, contextual variables in our organizational environment like innovative culture, organizational cynicism, and organizational injustice can affect wellbeing outcomes.

Innovative culture is the idea of how much and how an organization supports, promotes, and rewards creativity and innovation. Employee innovative behavior is critically enabled by an innovative culture, which in doing so also defines employee wellbeing (Ekmekcioglu and Öner, 2024). Innovation happens within a culture that encourages collaboration, trust, resource mobilization, and personal growth which in turn leads to employee wellbeing. On the other hand, a culture with no such a culture will result in stagnation and disengagement which brings down employees' mental and emotional health. Organizational cynicism, which is where employees have cynical attitudes towards organizational motives and which in turn leads to a lack of trust, motivation and to the employees creating a toxic work environment (Ike et al.,

2024) further complicates this relationship. While cynicism can in itself be extremely destructive, it can also undermine the positive effects of innovative behavior and culture on wellbeing, so it is important.

Organizational injustice is also another critical variable in this study, representing employees' perceptions that they are the victims of faulty decision-making, unfair resource allocation, or unfair interpersonal interactions. Feelings of resentment, stress disengagement, and further reduction of wellbeing inevitably follow perceived injustice. The problem with this issue becomes worse when it's coupled with innovative behavior and culture, because unfair practices may cause employees to stop participating in innovative activities that harm employees' wellbeing.

Though there have been studies on the influence of these variables on employee wellness individually, there has been no research on the interaction of these factors within a single environment, to determine how they affect employee wellbeing (Ahmed M. A. O. et al., 2024). However, the connection between innovative culture, innovative behavior, organizational cynicism, and organizational injustice on employee wellbeing has not been exploited sufficiently. Further, existing studies fail to take into account the moderating and mediating relationships these variables might possess for each other which creates a void in understanding how these factors jointly influence employee experiences and outcomes (Zhao et al., 2022).

To fill these gaps, this study investigates the direct, indirect, and moderated relationships among these variables in an attempt to better understand how they influence employee wellbeing (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024). For example, innovative behavior is generally good for wellbeing, but these effects may be modified by negative organizational factors, e.g., cynicism and injustice. Furthermore, this study hypothesizes that an innovative culture moderates the effect of organizational cynicism and justice on wellbeing, naming it as a medium that prevents the negative outcomes caused by toxic workplace dynamics. The study integrates these variables in a single framework so that the results can provide a more holistic view to explain how organizations can create an environment that facilitates innovation as well as employee welfare.

This study has three main objectives. First, it is intended to estimate the direct effect of employees' innovative behaviors on their wellbeing, indicating the positive outcomes of individual creativity. Second, it looks at the influence of organizational cynicism and injustice on employee wellbeing and innovative culture, revealing the negative interaction processes to undermine organizational effectiveness. Third, it studies the moderating and mediating roles of organizational factors, in particular, how cynicism and injustice moderate the relation between innovative behavior and wellbeing, and how innovative culture mediates the effect of organizational factors on wellbeing. These objectives match the bigger objective of finding actions that can enhance employee experiences and organizational results.

Theoretically and practically, this study has important implications. This is theoretically significant to organizational behavior literature because it integrates several variables into a single framework and provides a complete analysis of the interrelationships among these variables. It closes existing research gaps by supplying empirical evidence of the mechanisms that moderate and mediate the impact of innovative workplaces on employee wellbeing. Findings will be of practical use for managers and policymakers seeking to foster a setting enabling both innovation and employee welfare.

Understanding what creates or blocks wellbeing allows organizations to create targeted interventions to build a culture of trust, fairness, and support.

Moreover, the special situational environment of Chinese organizations forms a proper lens for this study due to China's rapid economic and technological development and its consequences on the workplace situation (Zhang, 2024). Finally, we will have culture-specific findings on the drivers of employee wellbeing and innovation and how this can be used to influence global best practices. Focusing on a timely topic, these insights will be of great value to organizations around the globe as they strive to navigate the growing competitive pressures involved in promoting innovation.

2 Literature review

2.1 Theoretical framework

This study is highly relevant to innovation management theory since it helps to understand how organizations can initiate, implement, and sustain innovation as a competitive advantage (Tidd and Bessant, 2021). For its part, innovation is not only about technological progress; it also involves the workplace, employee engagement, and the ability to adapt, which are all elements involved in the organization's success. There is a need to incorporate innovation-related constructs in this study because, in an innovation-driven environment, there is more creativity, collaboration, and proactive problem solving which leads to better employee well-being (Liu, 2024).

The present study attempts to use Innovation Management Theory to examine how organizational factors, particularly injustice within an organization, and cynicism within an organization, can obstruct the innovation-driven workplace. Trust, fairness, and openness to change, are the terms of an innovative workplace. However, unfair treatment (organizational injustice) is perceived as hurting the trust and psychological security of employees, undermining employees' psychological safety, and therefore their willingness to engage in innovative behaviors. Additionally, organizational cynicism, defined as a negative attitude of employees toward their organization, also contributes to the resistance to change and a decrease in employees' motivation, which ultimately results in the downgrading of the organization's innovative potential (Liu, 2024).

Furthermore, this study situates innovation not only as a business imperative but as a form of organizational adaptation to climate and environmental pressures. In this sense, innovation management theory is extended to incorporate climate-adaptive behavior, where firms strive to be both competitive and sustainable. This aligns with eco-organizational perspectives that frame innovation as a strategic tool to respond to ecological uncertainty, align with regulatory compliance, and build organizational resilience. The integration of justice and cynicism into this adaptive model reflects the psychological and cultural readiness of organizations to cope with change.

Two independent variables, organizational injustice, and organizational cynicism are included because they are separate but related obstacles to an innovation-driven culture. Organizational justice directly creates trust and fairness in them while organizational cynicism creates resistance against change and unwillingness to innovate among the employees. This study addresses these factors and how this in turn paves the way for developing a fair, transparent,

supportive organizational culture that supports the innovation management process and thereby improves employee wellbeing.

2.2 Empirical studies and hypothesis development

The ability of employees to generate, promote and implement new ideas, and their innovative behavior, has a great impact on their well-being (Ali Ababneh, 2022). Innovation comprises an engagement activity that leads to personal achievement, as well as autonomy, supports job satisfaction and enhances psychological resilience. In this, there is also agreement with the findings by Anderson et al. (2014) which reveals that innovative tasks increase intrinsic motivation and make employees feel valued and important in the organizations. More specifically, Yuan and Woodman (2010) indicate that innovative behavior develops employees' problem-solving skills to cope more effectively with workplace problems, potentially reducing employees' stress or making them emotionally stable. In addition, according to Zhou and George (2001), an environment that foster innovation promotes employees' trust in the organization processes hence morale and wellbeing. Collectively, these findings show that innovation-oriented employees not only do better on productivity side, but their mental and emotional health outcomes are superior too.

H1: Employees' innovative behavior positively impacts employee well-being.

An innovative culture, that promotes openness, collaboration, and psychological safety is key to promoting employee well-being (Liu et al., 2023). In organizations that prize innovation, employees feel safe and encouraged to contribute their thoughts and get actively involved in the creative process resulting in greater engagement and increased satisfaction. Martins and Terblanche (2003) argue that an innovative culture decreases stress and stressors by eliminating practices such as punitive regimes and rigid hierarchies that inhibit employee well-being. Additionally, Amabile et al. (1996) advocate that organizations driven by innovation give a raise to intrinsic motivation, a major determinant of job satisfaction and emotional wellbeing. Employees in innovative workplaces experience less burnout and feel more rewarded in their jobs, it is said by Scott and Bruce (1994) since such cultures are inclusive and give recognition. Innovative cultures create a space where employees feel as if their contributions are important for their psychological and emotional health in a positive way.

H2: Innovative culture positively impacts employee well-being.

Innovative employees may have a better way of managing the effects of organizational injustice on their health (Shrestha et al., 2024). A phenomenon of organizational injustice, which is defined as the perceptions of unfair distribution of resources or unfair decisions made within the organization, results in psychological disorders. However, innovative individuals, as discussed by Wang et al. (2021), are more likely to be resilient because they find ways how to reduce stress revealed that innovation-oriented employees turn perceived injustices into constructive work engagement and this is likely to reduce the negative impact of injustice. In addition, Huang et al. (2022) also pointed out that through innovative behavior, people are

likely to experience feelings of autonomy and competence thereby reducing the emotional cost of perceived injustice. This means that the level of innovativeness of employees can be considered as a moderator that helps to preserve the employees' well-being in the conditions of unfavorable work environments.

H3: Employees' innovative behavior moderates the relationship between organizational injustice and employee well-being.

Organizational cynicism is the lack of trust and negative beliefs toward the management of the organization can harm the workers (Vveinhardt et al., 2024). However, those employees who demonstrate high levels of innovative behavior usually look for ways to cope and stay positive. In the study, innovation-driven employees are those who emphasize finding new solutions and personal development hence minimizing the effects of cynicism. According to such people apply their innovation skills to make a positive contribution which reduces the impact of cynicism. In addition, showed that innovation-oriented employees have higher levels of resilience and thus, do not suffer much from their well-being when working in a cynicism-promoting environment.

H4: Employees' innovative behavior moderates the relationship between organizational cynicism and employee well-being.

This paper has argued that a positive culture within organizations can turn the effects of organizational injustice into positive personal and group development that can enhance work-related well-being (Illias et al., 2024). The negative aspect of organizational injustice that affects morale and satisfaction is compensated by the permissive atmosphere that values innovation and innovation established that an innovative culture is a culture of inclusion and collaboration that creates a culture that is not perceived as unfair. Li et al. (2023) revealed that employees in innovative organizations have high levels of job satisfaction and psychological safety despite the organizational conditions. Such cultures have ways of going about handling injustice systems which are healthy and hence support the idea that an innovative culture is good for well-being.

H5: Innovative culture mediates the relationship between organizational injustice and employee well-being.

In organizations where the prevailing culture is one of cynicism, the culture of innovation plays a critical role in being able to shift the employee's negativity toward progress and creativity. Cynicism leads to apathy and discontent, but according to Wu et al. (2021) an innovative culture shifts employee attention to purposes and milestones found that workplaces that are centered on innovation create hope and enthusiasm that can neutralize the harm of cynicism to well-being. In addition, as noted by employees' innovation cultures can help them manage negativity, and this increases employee resilience and makes them feel part of the team. This highlights the fact that there is a moderating effect of innovative cultures in protecting the well-being of employees in cynical organizations (Mishra and Afroz, 2024).

H6: Innovative culture mediates the relationship between organizational cynicism and employee well-being.

2.3 Methodology

Climate-adaptive organizations in this study refer to manufacturing firms that strategically align their internal processes, workforce management, and innovation initiatives to respond proactively to environmental sustainability demands, climate policy pressures, and green production expectations. These firms are characterized by their capacity to embed climate resilience into their organizational culture and innovation management systems. This research takes a quantitative approach to examine the correlation between organizational factors, employee innovation behavior, innovation culture, and employee well-being in Chinese manufacturing firms. This project is located in Beijing, China's capital city where the manufacturing industry keeps evolving and becoming more competitive. The region was chosen for its importance in manufacturing, and the potential for growth based on innovation in industries such as electronics manufacturing, automotive production, and machinery manufacturing. Due to the relationship of these industries with innovation and technological advancement, they are appropriate industries to study organizational culture, innovation, and employee well-being.

This study is aimed at employees working in various manufacturing firms in Beijing as the target population. These organizations are complex and diverse, and rich contexts to explore how innovation culture, organizational justice, and cynicism are related to employee wellbeing. The study was targeted at 300 respondents for both the measurement and structural model to ensure the reliability and validity of model estimation and hypothesis testing as recommended by statistical guidelines for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Stratified random sampling was used in the study to ensure representation of all levels of employees and all departments in the organizations, giving a total analysis of different perspectives and roles in the manufacturing sector. Stratified random sampling was applied by dividing employees into strata based on job role (e.g., managers, engineers, production workers, administrative staff) across selected manufacturing firms in Beijing. This approach ensured proportionate representation from each level of the organizational hierarchy and helped reduce sampling bias. The rationale for using stratified sampling is to capture variation in perceptions of innovation, justice, and well-being across functional roles that influence and experience organizational climate differently.

Data for this study was collected using a self-administered survey questionnaire that was distributed both online and face-to-face. The questionnaire contained standardized scales for measuring the relevant constructs: This dissertation investigates how organizational justice impacts employee well-being, innovative behavior, organizational cynicism, and innovative culture. This was to ensure the honest feedback of the respondents because they were assured that the participation was going to be anonymous and their responses would remain confidential. To ensure comparability with previous research, and to fit the Chinese manufacturing context, the scales employed include measures of employee well-being, innovative behavior, organizational cynicism, organizational justice, and innovative culture, using widely accepted instruments in those areas.

All constructs in this study were measured using validated and widely accepted standardized instruments adapted from prior studies. Employee well-being was measured using the scale by Gorgenyi-Hegyes et al. (2021), organizational cynicism by Dean et al. (1998), organizational injustice by Colquitt (2001), innovative

behavior by Scott and Bruce (1994), and innovative culture by Martins and Terblanche (2003). To ensure cultural relevance, all instruments were translated into Mandarin Chinese using Brislin's (1986) back-translation method. First, the original English versions were translated by a bilingual expert. Then, a second expert independently back-translated the content into English to ensure accuracy. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved with cultural adaptation to ensure semantic and conceptual equivalence.

All survey responses were reviewed for completeness. Cases with significant missing data were excluded using listwise deletion, and minimal missing values within items were handled through mean imputation, ensuring that the dataset remained balanced and reliable for PLS-SEM analysis. All survey responses were reviewed for completeness. Cases with significant missing data were excluded using listwise deletion, and minimal missing values within items were handled through mean imputation, ensuring that the dataset remained balanced and reliable for PLS-SEM analysis.

Several key values for the sample were found using descriptive statistics. Participants tended to be in the mid-career stage with an average age of 35.7 years ($SD = 7.9$). In terms of gender, 63% of the respondents were male, because the Chinese manufacturing sector workforce is male-dominated (Li et al., 2024). Employees in their current organizations had an average tenure of 8.4 years ($SD = 4.5$), with a fairly stable workforce with varying lengths of organizational experience. The result showed that the mean score for employee wellbeing was 4.2 ($SD = 0.67$) i.e. employees, in general, reported a high level of wellbeing. The average score for Innovative behavior was 3.8 ($SD = 0.74$) confirming that employees do engage in innovative activities, but there was variation in the level of behavior across our sample. The average score for organizational cynicism was 3.4 ($SD = 0.81$) which was considered moderate cynicism towards organizational practices. A mean score of 3.9 ($SD = 0.73$) was taken as organizational justice, indicating that people believed the organization was fair overall. In addition, innovative culture had an average score of 4.1 ($SD = 0.62$), indicating that employees perceived their organizations to be very innovative.

The proposed relationships between the constructs were then tested using PLS-SEM on data. This approach is particularly suited for models with intermediate and controlling variables so that a detailed analysis of the relationships between organizational factors, innovation, and employee wellbeing is possible. It included the evaluation of the measurement model assessing reliability and the validity of the constructs and the structural model for hypothesis testing. The study was interpreted in light of the theoretical background and practical recommendations for improving employee wellbeing in the manufacturing setting is presented.

3 Results

3.1 Measurement model

Cronbach's Alpha values represent the internal consistency of each construct (each construct should have a Cronbach's Alpha value higher than 0.7) as a general rule. Employee Wellbeing (Cronbach's Alpha of 0.675) and Employees' Innovative Behavior (0.644) slightly fall below this threshold, which may suggest moderate internal consistency. The value of Innovative Culture also follows a similar pattern of 0.652. As these values are slightly lower, exploratory research can accept them, and further refinement of the items may increase consistency. On the other hand, Organizational Cynicism and Organizational Injustice are demonstrated to have satisfactory levels of internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.727 and 0.65, respectively (Table 1).

rho_A values closely match Cronbach's Alpha, indicating further indication of the internal consistency of the constructs. All constructs' Composite Reliability values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating that the measurement model has adequate reliability. Composite Reliability values of all the constructs, such as Employee Wellbeing, Employees' Innovative Behavior, Innovative Culture, Organizational Cynicism, and Organizational Injustice are all above 0.77, therefore, the constructs reliably measure the intended latent variables. Convergent validity is assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values with a threshold of 0.5 meaning that the constructs explain above 50% of the variance of their indicators. This criterion is met by Employee Wellbeing (AVE = 0.506) and Organizational Cynicism (AVE = 0.549), while Employees' Innovative Behavior (AVE = 0.483) and Innovative Culture (AVE = 0.424) were found just below. The AVE value of Organizational Injustice is the highest (0.592) indicating higher convergent validity. Overall, the results indicate that although the measurement model is reliable, the convergent validity of some constructs needs to be improved.

Table 2 shows the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of correlations to validate the constructs. The HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait) criterion assesses discriminating validity by comparing the difference between correlations between constructs and their other constructs in the measurement model. An HTMT value less than 0.85 is typically considered acceptable discriminant validity, but a value of 0.90 or lower is sometimes used in exploratory studies.

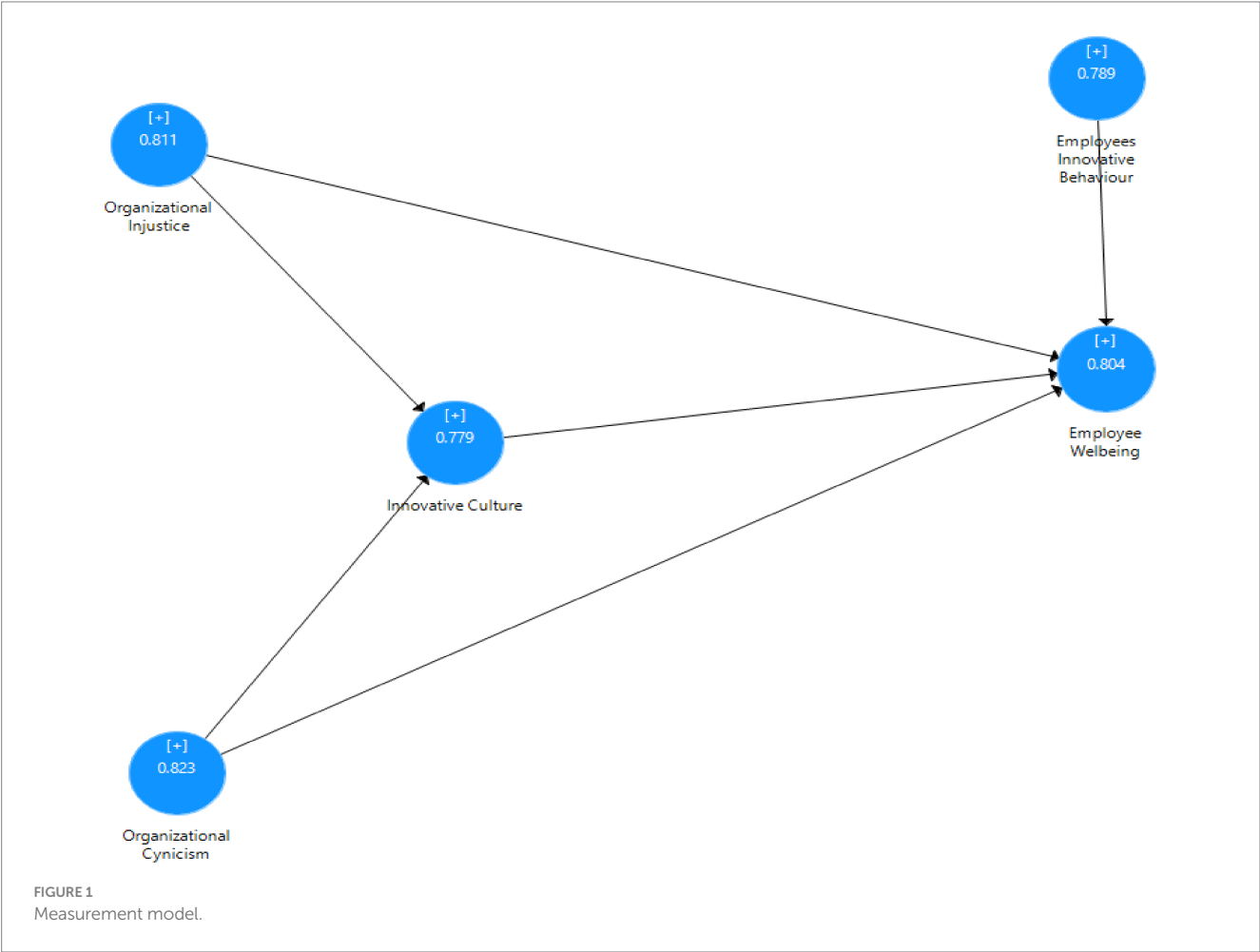
The analysis shows that all constructs surpass the benchmark for discriminant validity since none of the HTMT values has exceeded 0.85. Employee Well-being demonstrates adequate degrees of distinction level from Employees' Innovative Behavior (0.492), Innovative Culture (0.438), Organizational Cynicism (0.312) and

TABLE 1 Reliability analysis.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Wellbeing	0.675	0.675	0.804	0.506
Employees Innovative Behavior	0.644	0.643	0.789	0.483
Innovative Culture	0.652	0.686	0.779	0.424
Organizational Cynicism	0.727	0.796	0.823	0.549
Organizational Injustice	0.65	0.687	0.811	0.592

TABLE 2 Discriminant validity assessment (HTMT criteria).

Constructs	Employee Wellbeing	Employees' Innovative Behavior	Innovative Culture	Organizational Cynicism	Organizational Injustice
Employee Wellbeing					
Employees' Innovative Behavior	0.492				
Innovative Culture	0.438	0.702			
Organizational Cynicism	0.312	0.269	0.387		
Organizational Injustice	0.293	0.304	0.375	0.44	



Organizational Injustice (0.293). However, similar to Employees' Innovative Behavior, HTMT values less than the threshold are observed between Innovative Culture (0.702), Organizational Cynicism (0.269), and Organizational Injustice (0.304), indicating discriminant validity.

However, Innovative Culture shows satisfactory discriminant validity (0.387) with Organizational Cynicism and (0.375) with Organizational Injustice. In addition, Organizational Cynicism and Organizational Injustice are statistically different (HTMT values of 0.44). The results of the HTMT analysis show that overall, the

constructs are clearly distinct from each other, which corroborates with the discriminant validity of the measurement model (Figure 1).

3.2 Justification of using PLS SREM

This research uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) because it enables one to analyze the intricate associations between organizational injustice, organizational cynicism, and employee well-being within the context of Innovation Management Theory. This

study is particularly suitable for SEM as it can simultaneously analyze multiple dependent and independent variables to also capture the direct and indirect effects. Since organizational injustice and organizational cynicism are related constructs that may jointly affect employee well-being, SEM is a more sophisticated approach to understanding their combined influence. Furthermore, SEM proves beneficial in testing latent variables, which are often unmeasurable directly, and hence, makes the analysis more robust and reliable. This study can deliver deeper insights regarding the influence of such workplace dynamics on innovation-driven environments and employee wellbeing through SEM (Table 3).

3.3 Problem formulation

Workplace dynamics significantly influence employee well-being and innovation. Organizational cynicism and injustice are two critical factors that contribute to a negative work environment, ultimately affecting employee morale and engagement. Cynicism arises when employees perceive a disconnect between organizational values and leadership actions, leading to distrust and disengagement. Similarly, organizational injustice—whether in terms of procedural fairness, distributive equity, or interactional justice—creates dissatisfaction among employees, reducing their willingness to participate in innovative activities. These negative workplace factors can hinder the development of an innovative culture, which is essential for fostering creativity, collaboration, and overall job satisfaction. The study aims

to examine how organizational cynicism and injustice impact employee well-being and whether an innovative culture can mitigate these adverse effects.

3.4 Cause analysis

The statistical analysis reveals several significant relationships that explain how workplace conditions affect employee well-being. Organizational cynicism negatively influences both employee well-being ($\beta = -0.019$, $p = 0.005$) and innovative culture ($\beta = -0.017$, $p = 0.000$). Employees who experience cynicism are less likely to engage in creative problem-solving and may struggle with motivation. Similarly, organizational injustice is a strong negative predictor of employee well-being ($\beta = -0.012$, $p = 0.012$) and innovative culture ($\beta = -0.052$, $p = 0.001$). Employees who feel unfairly treated are less likely to contribute to innovation, further deteriorating their well-being.

Conversely, an innovative culture positively affects employee well-being ($\beta = 1.024$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that when organizations promote innovation, employees experience greater job satisfaction and psychological stability. Furthermore, employees who engage in innovative behavior report higher well-being ($\beta = 0.269$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that innovation at an individual level can contribute to a more fulfilling work experience.

The moderating effects show that both organizational cynicism and injustice moderate the relationship between innovative behavior

TABLE 3 Structural equation model.

Relationships	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	p Values
Employees Innovative Behavior → Employee wellbeing	0.269	0.269	0.011	3.541	0.000
Innovative Culture → Employee Well-being	1.024	1.024	0.027	11.869	0.000
Organizational Cynicism → Employee wellbeing	−0.019	−0.002	0.017	2.824	0.005
Organizational Cynicism → Innovative Culture	−0.017	−0.018	0.047	4.582	0.000
Organizational Injustice → Employee Well-being	−0.012	−0.012	0.005	2.516	0.012
Organizational Injustice → Innovative Culture	−0.052	−0.015	0.044	3.438	0.001
Moderating Effect					
OC > EIB → Employee Wellbeing	0.109	0.109	0.004	2.202	0.028
OI > EIB → Employee Wellbeing	0.009	0.009	0.004	2.53	0.012
Mediating Variable					
Organizational Cynicism → Innovative Culture → Employee Wellbeing	0.222	0.224	0.049	4.497	0
Organizational Injustice → Innovative Culture → Employee Wellbeing	0.156	0.154	0.046	3.404	0.001

and well-being ($OC > EIB: \beta = 0.109, p = 0.028$; $OI > EIB: \beta = 0.009, p = 0.012$). This indicates that in a workplace with high cynicism or injustice, even employees' innovative efforts may not translate into improved well-being. However, the mediating analysis highlights that innovative culture plays a key role in mitigating the negative effects of cynicism and injustice on employee well-being ($OC \rightarrow IC \rightarrow$ Well-being: $\beta = 0.222, p = 0.000$; $OI \rightarrow IC \rightarrow$ Well-being: $\beta = 0.156, p = 0.001$). This suggests that fostering an innovation-friendly environment can help counterbalance the negative effects of workplace cynicism and injustice.

While several relationships were statistically significant, such as the effects of organizational injustice and cynicism on employee well-being, their effect sizes were relatively weak (e.g., $\beta = -0.012$ and $\beta = -0.019$). This suggests that although these factors negatively influence employee well-being, their direct impact may be less substantial than anticipated. This could be due to mediating variables such as innovative culture, or employee resilience buffering these effects. Practitioners should interpret these findings with caution, recognizing the nuanced influence of organizational negativity.

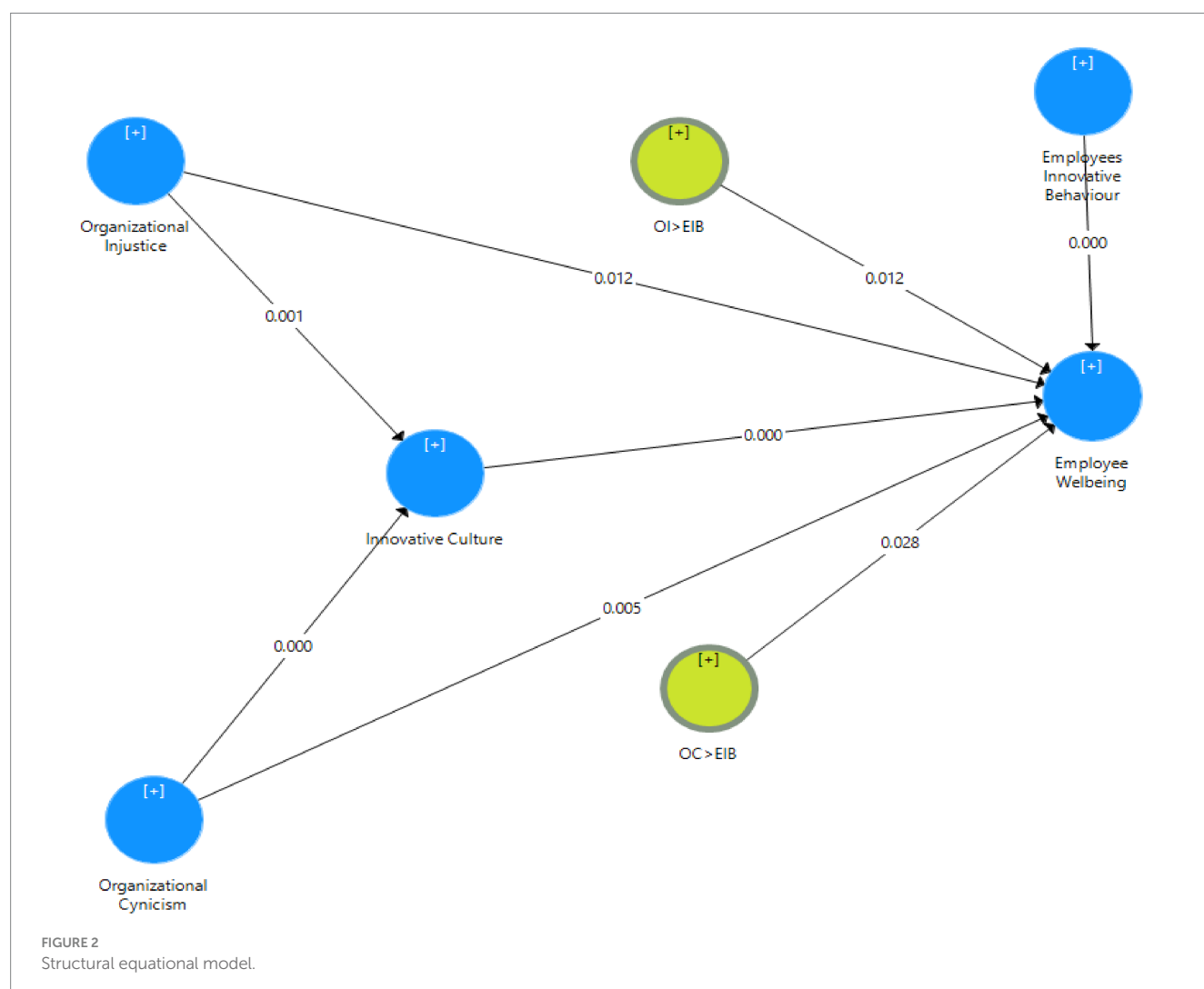
Regarding AVE and reliability, although all constructs achieved acceptable composite reliability (>0.7), a few AVE values—particularly for Employees' Innovative Behavior (0.483) and Innovative Culture

(0.424)—fell slightly below the 0.5 benchmark. As the study adopts an exploratory design, these values remain within acceptable limits. Nonetheless, future studies are encouraged to refine scale items or use confirmatory approaches to strengthen measurement precision (Figure 2).

4 Discussion

The analysis of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) reveals important findings regarding the interconnection between organizational factors, employee innovative behavior, innovative culture, and employee well-being in Chinese manufacturing organizations (Cao et al., 2022). These results are consistent with and build upon previous research, providing a more detailed picture of how these constructs relate to one another.

This means that when employees are involved in innovative activities they enjoy their work and they also have better psychological health (Karimi et al., 2023). This finding is consistent with the previous research on the motivation intrinsic to innovation tasks. These innovative behaviors help the employees to feel that they are valuable in their organizations and this enhances their mental health and job



satisfaction. Moreover, the tension in the manufacturing organizations' environment in China enhances the significance of innovation as a means of personal and organizational development (Yin et al., 2022).

Although the statistical findings are clear, a deeper interpretive lens reveals the importance of contextual variables in shaping employee perceptions. For instance, in Chinese manufacturing firms, hierarchical structures may reinforce perceptions of injustice or suppress dissent, leading to elevated cynicism. However, where management communicates transparently and supports bottom-up innovation, employee well-being improves despite structural rigidity.

The positive link between innovative culture and employee well-being establishes that promoting an organizational environment that encourages creativity and tries out has a positive impact on the psychological health of the employees (Zhou et al., 2020). This result follows and supports the proposition that an organizational culture of innovation is related to employees receiving organizational resources, decision autonomy, and positive leadership which in turn leads to improved well-being. In a manufacturing environment where both efficiency and innovation are required, this is especially important for the morale of the workforce and the prevention of burnout (Turato et al., 2022).

The moderating effect of employee innovative behavior on the relationship between organizational injustice and employee well-being provides evidence of the buffering effect of innovation under stress (Samma et al., 2020). This means that those employees who participate in innovative behaviors may not be negatively affected by organizational injustices as they see them as something that can be conquered. This is by the work done where they showed that the employees with high levels of innovation potential are more likely to cope with the adverse conditions in an organization. This moderating effect implies that innovation serves as a psychological shield that helps employees retain their health despite feeling being treated unfairly (Guo et al., 2024).

Likewise, the mediating role of employee innovative behavior in the relationship between organizational cynicism and employee well-being shows that positive and constructive attitudes are useful. Those employees who are innovative are likely to suffer less from the negative effects of cynicism and are more likely to have the resources to combat the negative side of the organization. This study is similar to Naeem et al. (2024) who showed that proactive individuals can turn organizational stress into opportunities hence protecting their health.

This paper has also provided insights into how the mediating role of innovative culture in the relationship between OC and EW underlines the change potential of cultural factors (Osman et al., 2023). Companies that encourage innovation create a culture that helps employees cope with the effects of cynicism. This finding is consistent with the propositions of \) who noted that high cultural innovation would lead to low organizational cynicism due to an increase in identification and meaning. This mediation effect is particularly important in Chinese manufacturing organizations in which innovation is a key source of competitive advantage (Wang et al., 2022).

Last, the role of innovative culture in moderating the relationship between organizational injustice and employee well-being shows that cultural factors can help to close the gap between the perception of unfair treatment in the workplace and positive well-being (Karaca et al., 2023). Thus, organizations should design a work environment

that encourages idea generation and sharing in the workplace to address the problem of perceived injustice. This is consistent who pointed out that organizational resources help to buffer stressors at the workplace. In organizations that are characterized by manufacturing where hierarchical organizational structure creates the perception of injustice, the culture of innovation is a vital source of positive change for employees (Alriyami et al., 2024).

This paper has also found that innovation culture and encouraging innovation can not only help to improve organizational performance but also have a positive impact on employees' health (Ekmekcioglu and Öner, 2024). These results can be useful for the further development of the theories that describes the organizations' processes and behaviors as well as the psychological states of employees, specifically, the importance of the strategic management of innovation. Thus, as a synthesis of findings with the prior research, this study presents a conceptual model to explain and predict how organisational factors affect employee outcomes.

In addition, the findings of this study are indicative of implications for using the Social Exchange Theory (SET) in a Chinese manufacturing organization setting. The extension of SET, which notes positive organizational behaviors and exchanges resulting in better employee outcomes, can be achieved by introducing the role of innovation in the workplace. Traditionally, SET has been concerned with the reciprocal nature of exchanges between employees and organizations, but this study provides evidence of how innovation culture and employee innovative behavior can substantially change that exchange. Employees who participate in innovative behaviors perceive an organizational exchange that is more valuable, which also contributes to positive psychological health and wellbeing.

The significance of SET is that, in addition to being a process of organizational improvement, innovation has real meant as a psychological resource for employees, particularly in a manufacturing industry where one must work under high levels of stress and pressure. This, to me, is important because it stresses the need to raise a culture that inspires innovation for the sake of a healthy, engaged workforce as well as for competitive advantage. By concentrating on innovation, manufacturing organizations could address the negative consequences of organizational cynicism and injustice, resulting in increased employee satisfaction and the long-term success of the organization. These findings are particularly relevant for Chinese manufacturing firms, where hierarchical structures and rapid innovation demands coexist. Promoting fairness and a supportive culture can reduce turnover, boost morale, and improve performance in a highly competitive industrial environment.

5 Conclusion

Same with the suggestions before. The present research contributes to the literature by underlining the importance of innovative behavior and culture in enhancing the well-being of employees within Chinese manufacturing firms. The current study also reveals that employees' innovative behavior has a positive effect on their psychological well-being given that it is an intrinsic motivation that enables them to come up with adversity in the workplace such as organizational injustice and cynicism. At the same time, an innovative culture is a positive environment that influences employee satisfaction and reduces the occurrence of unfavorable organizational phenomena. These findings provide a glimpse of how

individual characteristics and cultural variables interact to influence employee well-being and effectiveness and provide useful information to managers and policymakers in their efforts to enhance employee well-being and organizational performance.

This research also focuses on the moderating role of innovative culture as a potential source for change. Through recreating organizational culture and fostering conditions that encourage imagination, cooperation, and learning, it is possible to moderate the negative consequences of organizational injustice and cynicism on employee well-being. These results enhance the theoretical knowledge of organizational processes and provide guidelines for creating innovative cultures. Below are the implications of these insights to the Chinese manufacturing organizations as they seek to manage their human resource in the global market: The study suggests that more work is needed to investigate these processes in other sectors and countries to expand and replicate the findings.

This study has implications for the management of organizations seeking to promote employee wellbeing and innovation. Chinese manufacturing firms' managers must emphasize creating an organizational culture that takes an active part in promoting innovation, which directly affects the employee's psychological health and job satisfaction. Organizations can help employees cope with organizational stressors such as injustice and cynicism, by promoting an environment that promotes idea-sharing, decision autonomy, and creative problem-solving. Additionally, if managers invest in employee development programs that build innovative behaviors, these can act as a buffer to negative organizational experiences, creating employees who are more resilient and better able to maintain wellbeing. These findings indicate that organizational performance can be improved along with a healthier and more engaged workforce, by focusing on innovation, producing a competitive advantage against the highly competitive field of the manufacturing industry.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval was not required for this study as it involved the use of anonymized survey data collected from adult participants in accordance with standard research practices. The research did not involve any sensitive or personally identifiable

information, ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines. The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s) for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

Author contributions

ZJ: Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization, Supervision. MT: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Data curation, Investigation, Project administration. SS: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Resources, Supervision, Validation. AS: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Software.

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