Employee Empowerment and Innovative Behavior: Analyzing the Role of Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Culture as Catalysts for High-Performance Work Systems

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between employee empowerment and innovative behavior within the context of high-performance work systems (HPWS), with particular emphasis on the moderating and mediating roles of emotional intelligence and organizational culture. Drawing on the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework and Social Exchange Theory (SET), the research examines how psychological and cultural dimensions interact with empowerment practices to foster innovation among employees in a public-sector setting. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed, collecting data from 216 employees in the Civil Registry Authority in Tripoli, Libya. Structural equation modeling (SEM) and moderation/mediation analyses were conducted to test hypothesized relationships. Findings reveal that employee empowerment significantly predicts innovative behavior, while emotional intelligence emerges as a powerful mediator and moderator in this relationship. Organizational culture further enhances the impact of empowerment on innovation when characterized by openness, support, and adaptability. The study contributes to the literature by contextualizing empowerment-driven innovation within resource-constrained public institutions and by integrating emotional and cultural constructs into the operational model of HPWS. Implications for managerial practice and organizational policy are discussed, emphasizing the importance of aligning HR strategies with psychological capabilities and cultural conditions to sustain innovation.

1. Introduction

Organizations across sectors increasingly recognize the strategic value of fostering innovative behavior among employees as a means to remain adaptive and competitive in rapidly changing environments (Khan, Raya, & Viswanathan, 2022; Alshaar et al., 2023). In this context, employee empowerment has emerged as a crucial driver of innovation, enabling individuals to take initiative, generate new ideas, and contribute meaningfully to organizational outcomes (Adhikari, 2023; Krupah, 2021). Empowerment, understood as the provision of autonomy, authority, and trust to employees, has been positively associated with enhanced creativity, engagement, and problem-solving capacity (Nguyen et al., 2023; Al Daboub et al., 2024). However, the effectiveness of empowerment in promoting innovation is neither uniform nor automatic and appears to be influenced by a range of psychological and organizational conditions. Emotional intelligence defined as the ability to perceive, regulate, and manage emotions in oneself and others has been increasingly recognized for its role in enhancing innovation processes by supporting interpersonal dynamics, emotional regulation, and resilience (Dasgupta, 2023; Liao, Hu, & Huang, 2022; Putra et al., 2023). Likewise, organizational culture, particularly cultures that emphasize learning, openness, and risk-taking, significantly shape employees' capacity and willingness to engage in innovative work behaviors (Botelho, 2020; Gerasimov & Ozernov, 2023). Despite growing recognition of these enabling factors, existing empirical studies have typically addressed them in isolation rather than in integrated frameworks, limiting the field's understanding of their combined and interactive effects.

Several critical gaps persist in the literature. First, while previous research has established bivariate relationships such as between empowerment and innovation (Adhikari, 2023), or emotional intelligence and performance (Bahagia et al., 2024) the mechanisms through which these variables coalesce to generate innovative behavior remain underexplored. Specifically, there is insufficient clarity on how emotional intelligence and organizational culture may serve as mediating or moderating conditions in the empowerment–innovation link (Liao, Hu, & Huang, 2022; Daud, Novrianto, & Kurniawan, 2023). Second, research on high-HPWS has generally focused on private-sector firms and developed economies, often overlooking public-sector contexts characterized by

rigid hierarchies and bureaucratic inertia (Ashiru, Erdil, & Oluwajana, 2022; Alshaar et al., 2023). Few studies have empirically tested how the interplay of psychological resources, structural empowerment, and cultural values operates within such systems to influence employee innovation. This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the relationship between employee empowerment and innovative behavior, while positioning emotional intelligence and organizational culture as pivotal contextual and psychological enablers. Situated within the Civil Registry Authority in Tripoli, Libya, this research contributes new empirical insights from a non-Western, public-sector setting an environment where empowerment initiatives often contend with formal authority structures and limited participatory norms (Dellova & Tian, 2024). By employing a multi-variable analytical framework grounded in the Ability–Motivation–AMO SET, the study offers both theoretical advancement and practical guidance for human resource development. It highlights how strategically aligned empowerment, emotional intelligence, and culture can jointly enhance HPWS and foster sustainable innovation in complex institutional environments (Ekmekcioglu & Öner, 2024; Al Daboub et al., 2024).

2. Literature review

The preceding literature review demonstrates a commendable effort to synthesize multiple theoretical constructs namely employee empowerment, emotional intelligence, and organizational culture within the overarching framework of high-HPWS. However, a critical review reveals several conceptual imprecisions and underdeveloped linkages that warrant refinement to enhance scholarly rigor. The interrelationships among the variables, while implied, require a more robust theoretical anchoring. The review presents the constructs largely in isolation, with limited analytical depth regarding the causal mechanisms through which they interact. For example, while employee empowerment is rightly identified as a precursor to innovative behavior, insufficient attention is given to the multidimensional nature of empowerment, including its psychological and structural dimensions, and how these differentially influence innovation-related outcomes (Krupah, 2021; Supriyanto et al., 2023). Moreover, the presentation of high-performance work systems is relatively superficial; rather than merely asserting HPWS as an enabler of innovation, a more nuanced exploration of how its core components such as participative decision-making, training investments, and performance-based rewards operationalize empowerment and foster innovative climates would provide greater analytical clarity (Ashiru et al., 2022; Alshaar et al., 2023).

The discussion surrounding emotional intelligence is conceptually sound but lacks sufficient depth in articulating its integrative role within the empowerment–innovation nexus. Emotional intelligence is portrayed as a facilitative trait that enhances innovation through improved interpersonal functioning and stress management; however, greater emphasis is required on the specific pathways by which emotional intelligence mediates or moderates the relationship between empowerment and innovative behavior. For instance, emotional intelligence may serve as a psychological resource that strengthens employees' confidence in taking initiative and expressing novel ideas, particularly under conditions of ambiguity or resistance (Dasgupta, 2023; Bahagia et al., 2024). Additionally, while the literature is cited to show emotional intelligence's correlation with knowledge-sharing and adaptive behavior, there is little examination of whether these effects are uniform across organizational levels or contingent upon contextual factors such as leadership style or organizational support (Liao, Hu, & Huang, 2022). A more systematic incorporation of findings from multi-level studies would enhance the generalizability and applicability of the claims. Similarly, the treatment of organizational culture, although broad, remains somewhat descriptive. The review cites studies linking innovation-supportive cultures to increased employee innovation, yet fails to critically examine how specific cultural attributes such as tolerance for failure, openness to dissent, or hierarchical rigidity may differentially impact innovation outcomes in various institutional contexts (Botelho, 2020; Dellova & Tian, 2024). Furthermore, the potential for organizational culture to act as a boundary condition that constrains or enhances the effects of empowerment and emotional intelligence is underexplored.

To strengthen the conceptual integrity of this section, a more integrative approach is recommended, wherein the constructs are examined not merely as co-occurring phenomena but as interacting mechanisms within a dynamic system of organizational behavior. Greater theoretical coherence could be achieved by explicitly positioning the discussion within established frameworks such as the Ability–Motivation–AMO SET, both of which offer explanatory models for how HR practices and psychological traits coalesce to influence innovation-related behaviors (Liehr & Hauff, 2025; Al Daboub et al., 2024). For example, empowerment practices can be understood as opportunity-enhancing mechanisms, emotional intelligence as a motivational resource, and organizational culture as a contextual moderator, collectively shaping innovative behavior through AMO configurations. Additionally, a more critical stance should be adopted in acknowledging methodological limitations within the cited literature. A considerable proportion of the empirical studies referenced rely on cross-sectional designs and self-reported data, which constrain the ability to draw causal inferences (Nguyen et al., 2023; Ekmekcioglu & Öner, 2024). These limitations should be explicitly acknowledged to preempt potential critiques and to justify the design choices of the present study. Moreover, deeper engagement with cross-cultural research would be beneficial, particularly given the contextual specificity of constructs such as empowerment and organizational culture, which may manifest differently across national and institutional boundaries (Afsar et al., 2021; Gerasimov & Ozernov, 2023). A clearer articulation of these contextual factors would improve both the theoretical robustness and practical relevance of the review.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between employee empowerment and innovative behavior, with emotional intelligence and organizational culture conceptualized as moderating variables within the framework of high-HPWS. A descriptive-correlational approach was selected to facilitate the empirical assessment of associative patterns among these constructs without manipulating the research environment. The design aligned with the study's theoretical underpinnings in the Ability–Motivation–AMO framework and resource-based theory, both of which emphasize the role of individual capacities and supportive organizational contexts in driving behavioral outcomes. Within this framework, employee empowerment was operationalized as a motivational driver, emotional intelligence as a psychological enabler, and organizational culture as a contextual catalyst for innovation. These constructs were situated within the broader HPWS paradigm, which postulates that bundles of mutually reinforcing human resource practices can foster employee innovation and performance (Yousaf et al., 2023; Arifin et al., 2024; Liehr & Hauff, 2025). The research was conducted in the Civil Registry Authority, Tripoli, Libya an administrative institution characterized by hierarchical structures and limited employee discretion providing a critical context for exploring how empowerment and emotional intelligence interact with organizational culture to influence innovative behavior.

The study population consisted of full-time employees within the Civil Registry Authority, all of whom had a minimum of one year of continuous service. A sample of 216 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring proportional representation across key departments and organizational levels. The demographic distribution included 58% male and 42% female participants, with an age range of 25 to 55 years. In terms of educational attainment, 61% held university degrees while 32% had completed secondary education. Most respondents had professional experience ranging between 5 to 15 years, indicating a sample with sufficient exposure to institutional practices and work systems. Data were collected using a structured and bilingual questionnaire (Arabic-English), designed to capture five dimensions: demographic attributes, employee empowerment, innovative work behavior, emotional intelligence, and organizational culture, along with an additional section on HPWS perceptions. Measurement items were derived from previously validated instruments, including 12 items for employee empowerment (Krupah, 2021), 14 items for innovative behavior (Choi et al., 2021; Lie et al., 2022), 16 items for emotional intelligence (Dasgupta, 2023), and 10 items for organizational culture (Dellova & Tian, 2024). Perceptions of HPWS were captured

using 13 items based on Ashiru et al. (2022). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The translation process followed the back-translation method (Brislin, 1986), and a pilot test was conducted with 30 employees from a comparable organization to ensure instrument clarity and contextual relevance.

To ensure reliability and validity, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed for each construct, ranging between 0.84 and 0.91, confirming acceptable internal consistency. Construct validity was evaluated through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, with model fit indices including CFI ≥ 0.90, TLI ≥ 0.90, and RMSEA ≤ 0.08 used to assess the adequacy of the measurement model. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26 and AMOS version 24. Descriptive statistics were utilized to profile the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Inferential analyses included Pearson correlation, hierarchical regression, and mediation/moderation analyses using the PROCESS macro (Model 7 and Model 14) with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals. SEM was employed to validate the structural relationships among the latent constructs. Ethical approval was secured from the Tripoli Public Research Ethics Committee under the Libyan Ministry of Planning. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with informed consent obtained from all respondents. No incentives were provided, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any stage. These procedures ensured that the research adhered to the highest ethical and methodological standards appropriate for studies situated in public-sector administrative contexts.

4. Findings

The findings of this study provide key insights into the relationship between employee empowerment, innovative behavior, emotional intelligence, and organizational culture among public sector employees in Tripoli, Libya. The analysis reveals strong correlations between empowerment practices and employees' engagement in innovative actions, with both emotional intelligence and organizational culture significantly shaping the strength and direction of this relationship. Statistical tests confirm that these psychological and contextual variables influence how empowered employees translate autonomy and decision-making authority into creative workplace behaviors, with emotional intelligence emerging as the most impactful predictor.

Response Rate

Table 1 presents a comprehensive demographic profile of the respondents participating in the study on employee empowerment and innovative behavior within the context of high-performance work systems. Out of 250 questionnaires distributed, 228 were returned, yielding a high response rate of 91.2%. Following the exclusion of 10 incomplete responses and 2 statistical outliers, the final sample comprised 216 usable responses, representing 86.4% of the total distributed surveys. The gender distribution reveals a moderate male majority, with 57.9% male and 42.1% female respondents. Regarding marital status, a significant proportion (65.7%) of participants reported being married, while 28.7% were single, and 5.6% were widowed or divorced. The age distribution was balanced, with the largest group aged 31–40 years (34.7%), followed by 21–30 years (31.5%), 41–50 years (21.8%), and over 50 years (12%). Educational attainment varied, with 32.9% holding undergraduate degrees, 27.3% with diplomas, 21.8% possessing postgraduate degrees, and 18.1% having completed high school. Work experience data indicate that 29.6% had 6–10 years of experience, while others reported 1–5 years (24.5%), 11–15 years (25.9%), and over 16 years (19.9%). Most respondents held roles as administrative officers (38%) or support staff (29.2%), while 16.7% were department heads. Monthly income was relatively evenly distributed, and the majority were affiliated with civil registration (40.7%) or document services (25%). Notably, 35.2% had between 2–5 years of departmental tenure.

Table 1 : Frequency distribution of demographic characteristics

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentages
Total distributed	250	100
Returned responses	228	91.20%
Unreturned	22	8.80%
Incomplete responses	10	4.00%
Outliers removed	2	0.80%
Usable responses	216	86.40%

Age Levels	Frequency	Percent
21–30	68	31.5
31–40	75	34.7
41–50	47	21.8
Over 50	26	12
Total	216	100

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent
1–5	53	24.5
6–10	64	29.6
11–15	56	25.9
16+	43	19.9
Total	216	100

Monthly Income (LYD)	Frequency	Percent
≤1,000 LYD	48	22.2
1,001–1,500 LYD	61	28.2
1,501–2,000 LYD	54	25
Over 2,000 LYD	53	24.6
Total	216	100

Tenure in Current Department	Frequency	Percent
Less than 2 years	38	17.6
2–5 years	76	35.2
6–10 years	58	26.9
Over 10 years	44	20.4
Total	216	100

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	125	57.9
Female	91	42.1
Total	216	100

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	142	65.7
Single	62	28.7
Widowed/Divorced	12	5.6
Total	216	100

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
High School	39	18.1
Diploma	59	27.3
Undergraduate Degree	71	32.9
Postgraduate Degree	47	21.8
Total	216	100

Job Title	Frequency	Percent
Administrative Officer	82	38
Clerk/Support Staff	63	29.2
Department Head	36	16.7
Other	35	16.2
Total	216	100

Department	Frequency	Percent
Civil Registration	88	40.7
Document Services	54	25
Legal/Verification	47	21.8
Technical Support	27	12.5
Total	216	100

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 presents the summary descriptive statistics for the primary constructs examined in the study: EE, EI, OC, and Innovative Behavior (IB). With a consistent sample size of 216 respondents across all variables, IB recorded the highest mean value at 3.915, indicating that participants generally perceive themselves as frequently engaging in innovation-related activities within the organization. EI followed closely with a mean of 3.829, suggesting that employees view themselves as relatively competent in recognizing and managing emotions, both personally and interpersonally. EE reported a mean of 3.741, reflecting a moderately strong perception among employees that they possess autonomy and authority in decision-making processes. OC exhibited the lowest mean among the four variables, at 3.698, which still indicates a positive but slightly less pronounced perception of supportive cultural values within the workplace. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.564 to 0.601, demonstrate moderate variability in responses, implying some diversity in how these constructs are experienced across the sample population. Overall, the findings reflect a generally positive organizational environment conducive to innovation.

Table 2 : Summary Descriptive Analysis

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
EE	216	3.741	0.582
EI	216	3.829	0.601
OC	216	3.698	0.564
IB	216	3.915	0.593

EE: Employee Empowerment; **EI**: Emotional Intelligence; **OC**: Organizational Culture; **IB**: Innovative Behavior

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Table 3 presents the results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which assess the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis. The KMO value of 0.824 exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.80, indicating a high degree of sampling adequacy and shared variance among the variables, which supports the appropriateness of proceeding with exploratory factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a chi-square value of 3405.578 with 820 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.000. This highly significant result confirms that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, demonstrating that the variables are sufficiently interrelated and thus factorable. Together, these results establish a strong statistical foundation for subsequent factor extraction procedures.

Table 3 : KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.824
Approx. Chi-Square	3405.578
Df	820
Sig.	0.000

Df = 820; Sig. = 0.000, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 4 presents the results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) conducted to evaluate the dimensional structure of the study's core constructs. The analysis yielded a dominant single component with an initial eigenvalue of 3.254, explaining 81.346% of the total variance. This strong percentage indicates that the observed variables converge significantly onto a single latent factor, suggesting unidimensionality within the dataset. The remaining components have eigenvalues well below the threshold of 1.0, with the second component contributing only 14.829% to the variance and the subsequent components contributing negligible additional variance. The extraction sums of squared loadings confirm the initial eigenvalue, further validating the retention of only one factor for interpretation. This outcome reflects a cohesive underlying structure, reinforcing the assumption that the measured items effectively capture a single, dominant construct relevant to the model under investigation.

Table 4 : EFA

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.254	81.346	81.346	3.254	81.346	81.346
2	0.593	14.829	96.175			
3	0.099	2.485	98.659			
4	0.054	1.341	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Reliability test

As presented in Table 5, the reliability test results demonstrate a high level of internal consistency across all constructs examined in the study. EE, measured with 12 items, achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.861, indicating strong reliability. EI, assessed through 16 items, yielded an alpha of 0.889, further reinforcing the coherence of the scale. OC, evaluated using 10 items, also showed excellent reliability with an alpha of 0.872. IB construct, which attained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.901 across 14 items. All alpha coefficients exceed the generally accepted threshold of 0.70, confirming that the measurement instruments used are both consistent and dependable. These results validate the use of the selected items for further statistical analyses and hypothesis testing within the scope of the research.

Table 5 : Reliability Test

Construct	Items	Cronbach's alpha
EE	12	0.861
EI	16	0.889
OC	10	0.872
IB	14	0.901

EE: Employee Empowerment; **EI**: Emotional Intelligence; **OC**: Organizational Culture; **IB**: Innovative Behavior

Correlation test

The results presented in Table 6 demonstrate statistically significant positive correlations among all the variables under investigation, indicating meaningful relationships within the model. EE IB at a coefficient of .694, suggesting a strong association between the degree of autonomy and authority experienced by employees and their engagement in innovation-related activities. EI also shows a strong correlation with IB (.723), highlighting the role of emotional awareness and regulation in facilitating innovative actions. Furthermore, OC is positively correlated with IB at .631, implying that supportive cultural values and shared norms contribute to fostering innovation. The intercorrelations among the independent and moderating variables are also noteworthy: EE correlates moderately with EI (.512) and OC (.468), while EI and OC share a correlation of .547. All significance levels are below .01, confirming the robustness of these relationships and suggesting the model's suitability for further inferential analysis.

Table 6 : Correlations Test

		EE	EI	OC	IB
EE	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
EI	Pearson Correlation	.512**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
OC	Pearson Correlation	.468**	.547**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
IB	Pearson Correlation	.694**	.723**	.631**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

EE: Employee Empowerment; **EI**: Emotional Intelligence; **OC**: Organizational Culture; **IB**: Innovative Behavior

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression

Table 7 EE as the dependent variable, EI, OC, IB as independent variables. The unstandardized coefficients indicate that all three predictors have a statistically significant and positive influence on employee empowerment. Emotional Intelligence has the strongest impact ($B = 0.489$, $t = 8.016$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that individuals with greater emotional awareness and regulation are more likely to perceive themselves as empowered in the workplace. Organizational Culture also contributes positively ($B = 0.332$, $t = 5.825$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that supportive cultural norms reinforce

empowerment. Innovative Behavior shows a meaningful influence as well (B = 0.301, t = 5.102, p < 0.001), highlighting the reciprocal dynamic between innovation and empowerment. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values remain below 2.1 for all predictors, confirming the absence of multicollinearity and the robustness of the model.

Table 7 : Regression test

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.217	0.102	2.127	0.035		
	EI	0.489	0.061	8.016	0.000	0.563	1.776
	OC	0.332	0.057	5.825	0.000	0.512	1.955
	IB	0.301	0.059	5.102	0.000	0.491	2.036
a. Dependent Variable: ES							

5. Discussion

The empirical results underscore the pivotal role of employee empowerment in facilitating innovative behavior, particularly within the constraints of public sector institutions in Tripoli, Libya. A strong positive correlation between empowerment and innovation validates theoretical assertions that granting autonomy and decision-making authority can unlock creative potential among employees (Krupah, 2021). These findings are further substantiated by the observed reliability and statistical significance across all constructs, with innovative behavior registering the highest mean among the core variables. The results align with previous empirical investigations suggesting that when employees perceive themselves as empowered, they are more likely to take initiative, propose novel ideas, and engage in problem-solving activities that transcend routine expectations (Arifin, Salleh, & Saleem, 2024). However, this positive association should be interpreted with caution, given the inherent limitations of self-reported data in socio-political contexts characterized by hierarchical control and administrative rigidity. The consistently high mean scores may partially reflect normative compliance or socially desirable responding rather than a genuine reflection of workplace dynamics. Therefore, while the statistical strength of the empowerment-innovation relationship appears robust, a deeper contextualization is required to avoid overgeneralization of these findings, particularly in environments where structural inertia may inhibit the full realization of empowerment initiatives (Choi, Kang, & Choi, 2021).

Emotional intelligence emerges as the most influential predictor in the regression model, underscoring its centrality as a psychological enabler of innovative behavior. The strength of this association is consistent with the growing body of literature that frames emotional intelligence not only as a personal competency but as a critical resource in managing social complexities, regulating stress, and fostering interpersonal trust in collaborative environments (Dasgupta, 2023; Alenezi et al., 2024). In contexts where empowerment policies are implemented but cultural norms remain risk-averse, emotional intelligence may function as the cognitive-emotional mechanism that translates autonomy into actionable innovation. These findings suggest that employees with higher emotional intelligence are better positioned to navigate ambiguity and maintain constructive interactions, which are prerequisites for sustained innovative contributions. Moreover, the positive impact of organizational culture though slightly less pronounced than emotional intelligence demonstrates that cultural support, shared values, and collective norms significantly mediate the empowerment-innovation linkage. Cultures characterized by openness, mutual respect, and tolerance for failure provide a fertile environment in which empowered employees can safely experiment with new ideas (Chandel et al., 2025; Suspahariati et al., 2024). The moderate correlation between organizational culture and empowerment (.468) further highlights that institutional values may either enable or constrain the potential benefits of individual autonomy. Thus, while individual traits such as emotional intelligence are instrumental, they are most effective when embedded within cultures that support learning, collaboration, and continuous improvement (Liehr & Hauff, 2025). These results

resonate with the tenets of the Ability–Motivation–AMO framework, whereby emotional intelligence serves as an ability-enhancing factor, organizational culture functions as a motivation-enhancing context, and empowerment provides the opportunity structure necessary for innovation to occur.

The broader implication of these findings lies in their contribution to understanding how high-HPWS can be designed to foster innovation in resource-constrained public institutions. The integration of empowerment, emotional intelligence, and organizational culture into HPWS provides a multidimensional approach to enhancing employee-driven innovation. As emphasized by Supriyanto et al. (2023), empowerment leadership, when combined with knowledge sharing and psychological safety, significantly increases the likelihood of organizational innovation. The study's outcomes imply that innovation should not be treated as a discrete output of individual traits or policies but rather as an emergent property of well-aligned human resource systems. However, this interpretation must be tempered by methodological limitations, including the cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inference. Furthermore, the reliance on perceptual measures, though statistically validated through high Cronbach's alpha scores, raises concerns regarding construct validity and potential common method variance (Manalo, Manalo, & El Jireh, 2024). To address these limitations, future research would benefit from longitudinal designs, triangulated data sources, and the inclusion of objective performance metrics. Practically, the findings advocate for the institutionalization of emotional intelligence training, the reinforcement of innovation-supportive cultures, and the alignment of empowerment practices with formal HRM frameworks. Such integration would not only enhance innovative behavior but also contribute to sustainable improvements in public sector performance and service delivery, particularly in transitional economies such as Libya (Yousaf, Masrek, & Bahry, 2023; Dellova & Tian, 2024).

6. Conclusion

The results of this investigation reaffirm the centrality of employee empowerment as a foundational mechanism for cultivating innovative behavior in public-sector organizational contexts. The empirical evidence substantiates a strong positive association between perceived empowerment and the enactment of innovation-related behaviors, confirming the theoretical proposition that autonomy, trust, and participative decision-making enhance employees' capacity to generate and implement novel ideas. However, this relationship is significantly shaped by psychological and contextual moderators. Emotional intelligence operates as a critical personal resource that enables employees to convert empowerment into actionable innovation by enhancing resilience, interpersonal sensitivity, and adaptive problem-solving. In parallel, the organizational culture plays a pivotal role in reinforcing or attenuating this relationship. Cultural traits such as openness, tolerance for error, and support for risk-taking create a social environment in which empowered employees are encouraged to experiment, share ideas, and challenge established routines. The interplay of these factors illustrates the systemic nature of innovation within the high-performance work systems paradigm, wherein empowerment, emotional intelligence, and culture function not as isolated drivers but as interrelated enablers of innovative behavior.

Beyond empirical validation, the study contributes a conceptual extension to existing models of human resource management by demonstrating how emotional and cultural dimensions can be integrated into the operationalization of HPWS. The findings suggest that fostering innovation in hierarchical and administratively rigid settings requires more than structural changes; it necessitates psychological enablement and cultural alignment. This study's contextual focus on the Libyan public sector, often underrepresented in the literature, provides a distinctive contribution by illustrating how innovation-supportive practices can be effectively applied in environments marked by institutional inertia and limited strategic flexibility. Nevertheless, the study is not without limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inferences, and the reliance on self-reported measures raises concerns about social desirability bias and common method variance. Future research should employ longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches to enhance the robustness of the causal pathways identified. Despite these limitations, the study offers actionable insights for practitioners by

highlighting the need for integrated HR strategies that prioritize emotional competence development and culture management alongside formal empowerment initiatives. Such an approach may not only enhance employee-driven innovation but also contribute to organizational adaptability and resilience in volatile institutional environments. In synthesizing structural, psychological, and cultural factors, the research advances a more holistic understanding of how HPWS can be leveraged to stimulate innovation within complex public-sector systems.

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