

The Impact of High-Performance Work Systems on Employees' Subjective Well-Being: A Study in Chinese Steel Structure Enterprises

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Abstract

This study delves into the intricate relationship between high-performance work systems (HPWS) and employees' subjective well-being within the unique context of Chinese steel structure enterprises. Utilizing theoretical frameworks from work psychology, social exchange theory, and the job characteristics model, the study investigates the pivotal role of perceived decent work as a mediator and the potential moderating effect of supervisor support. A comprehensive questionnaire survey involving 447 in-service employees serves as the primary data collection method, with rigorous analysis conducted using SPSS 27.0 and Mplus 7.4. The findings reveal that HPWS exert a positive influence on job satisfaction and job engagement among employees, with perceived decent work acting as a significant mediator in this relationship. However, contrary to expectations, supervisor support does not significantly moderate the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work. These insights provide practical implications for Chinese steel structure enterprises, emphasizing the importance of implementing effective HPWS to enhance employees' subjective well-being. The study underscores the critical role of decent work in fostering job satisfaction and engagement, ultimately contributing to the overall performance and long-term sustainability of the organization.

Keywords: High-Performance Work Systems, Subjective Well-Being, Decent Work, Work Psychology Theory, Supervisor Support, Steel Structure Enterprises.

1. Introduction

The Chinese steel structure industry, like many other heavy industries, has been grappling with a multitude of challenges in recent years. Overcapacity, environmental constraints, and intensifying market competition have posed significant threats to the profitability and sustainability of these enterprises (Xie & Zhang, 2020). Amidst these challenges, the well-being and satisfaction of employees have emerged as critical concerns for organizations. The recognition of employee happiness and decent work as pivotal factors in organizational success has prompted a shift towards strategies that prioritize employee well-being (Duffy et al., 2016). One such strategy is the implementation of high-performance work systems (HPWS), which have been gaining traction as a means of enhancing both organizational performance and employee welfare (Sun et al., 2007). HPWS encompasses a range of integrated human resource

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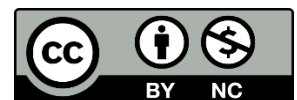
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management practices designed to optimize employee attitudes, behaviors, and skills, ultimately leading to improved organizational outcomes (Jiang et al., 2012). These practices often include comprehensive training programs, performance-based compensation structures, and mechanisms for employee involvement in decision-making processes (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Prior research has demonstrated the positive impact of HPWS on various organizational metrics, such as financial performance and productivity (Huselid, 1995). However, the literature on the relationship between HPWS and employees' subjective well-being, particularly within the context of Chinese steel structure enterprises, remains sparse. Subjective well-being, a multidimensional construct, encompasses an individual's cognitive and affective evaluations of their work experience (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011). It is characterized by job satisfaction, which reflects the extent to which employees find their work enjoyable and fulfilling, and job engagement, which is marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption in work-related tasks (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The enhancement of employees' subjective well-being is crucial for organizations, as it has been linked to improved job performance, reduced turnover rates, and heightened organizational commitment (Harter et al., 2002). Decent work, a concept introduced by the International Labour Organization (ILO), refers to work that is productive, provides a fair income, ensures security in the workplace, and respects fundamental rights and freedoms (ILO, 1999). Perceived decent work has been shown to have a positive influence on employees' job satisfaction and engagement (Duffy et al., 2017). However, the role of decent work as a mediator between HPWS and employees' subjective well-being has not been adequately explored in the literature. Furthermore, supervisor support, a key factor in the workplace environment, is defined as employees' perception that their supervisors value their contributions and are concerned about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2002). This support can significantly influence employees' work attitudes and behaviors, potentially moderating the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Given the aforementioned gaps in the literature, the present study aims to investigate the impact of HPWS on employees' subjective well-being in the context of Chinese steel structure enterprises. The study seeks to address several research questions: Does HPWS positively influence employees' subjective well-being? Does HPWS have a positive effect on perceived decent work? Does perceived decent work mediate the relationship between HPWS and employees' subjective well-being? And finally, does supervisor support moderate the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work? By providing empirical evidence on these research questions, this study contributes to the existing literature by shedding light on the impact of HPWS on employees' subjective well-being within a specific industry context. Additionally, it extends the theoretical framework of work psychology by incorporating decent work as a mediator and exploring the moderating role of supervisor support, thus offering a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships at play in the workplace.

2. Literature Review

2.1 High-Performance Work Systems

HPWS represents a strategic approach to human resource management that emphasizes the alignment of HR practices with organizational goals to enhance overall performance (Sun et al., 2007). These systems encompass a range of practices, including extensive training, performance-based rewards, employee participation, and fostering a collaborative work environment (Way, 2002). The underlying assumption is that such practices can improve employee capabilities, motivation, and opportunities for contribution, ultimately leading to better organizational outcomes. Extensive research has demonstrated the positive link between HPWS and various organizational performance indicators, such as financial performance, productivity, and market share (Jiang et al., 2012). At the individual level, HPWS has been shown to enhance job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance (Wang et al., 2019). These findings suggest that HPWS can create a conducive work environment that fosters employee engagement and productivity. However, despite the robust evidence supporting the benefits of HPWS, there remains a notable gap in understanding its impact on

employees' subjective well-being, particularly within specific industry contexts such as Chinese steel structure enterprises. This study aims to contribute to this literature by exploring the relationship between HPWS and subjective well-being in this unique setting.

2.2 Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being (SWB) is a multifaceted concept that encompasses an individual's overall evaluation of their work experience, including cognitive (e.g., job satisfaction) and emotional (e.g., job engagement and burnout) components (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011). Job satisfaction reflects the extent to which employees find their work enjoyable and fulfilling, while job engagement represents a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). SWB is crucial for organizations because it is associated with improved job performance, reduced turnover, and increased organizational commitment (Harter et al., 2002). Numerous studies have investigated the factors that influence SWB, with organizational factors such as job characteristics, leadership style, and work environment playing significant roles (Agho et al., 1992). Despite the extensive research on SWB, there is a dearth of studies examining the impact of HPWS on this important outcome. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how HPWS influences employees' SWB in the context of Chinese steel structure enterprises. By doing so, it contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between HPWS and employee well-being.

2.3 Decent Work

The concept of decent work, as promoted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), emphasizes the importance of work that is productive, provides a fair income, ensures security in the workplace, and respects fundamental rights and freedoms (ILO, 1999). Perceived decent work has been shown to positively impact employees' job satisfaction and engagement (Duffy et al., 2017), highlighting its significance for both employees and organizations. Decent work is influenced by a complex interplay of macro-level factors (e.g., national policies, labor laws) and micro-level factors (e.g., organizational practices, individual characteristics) (Duffy et al., 2016). While previous research has primarily focused on the macro-level determinants of decent work, there is a growing need to examine the role of organizational factors in shaping employees' perceptions of decent work. This study contributes to this emerging literature by exploring the impact of HPWS on perceived decent work. By doing so, it provides insights into how organizational practices can contribute to creating a work environment that meets the ILO's criteria for decent work and, consequently, enhances employee well-being.

2.4 Supervisor Support

Supervisor support is a critical factor that can significantly influence employees' work attitudes and behaviors (Eisenberger et al., 2002). It refers to the extent to which employees perceive their supervisors as valuing their contributions, caring about their well-being, and being available to provide assistance and feedback (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Research has shown that supervisor support is positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Furthermore, supervisor support has been identified as a potential moderator of the relationship between organizational practices and employee outcomes (e.g., HPWS and perceived decent work). When employees perceive high levels of supervisor support, they may be more likely to interpret organizational practices positively, leading to enhanced perceptions of decent work and, subsequently, improved SWB. Despite the importance of supervisor support, there is limited research examining its moderating role in the context of HPWS and perceived decent work. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how supervisor support influences the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the factors that shape employee perceptions and well-being.

2.5 Research Hypotheses

Based on the comprehensive literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed to guide the subsequent research:

- (1) H1: HPWS has a positive impact on employees' subjective well-being. This hypothesis builds on the existing evidence that HPWS can improve employee attitudes and behaviors, extending it to the context of SWB in Chinese steel structure enterprises.
- (2) H2: HPWS has a positive impact on perceived decent work. This hypothesis posits that HPWS contributes to creating a work environment that aligns with the ILO's criteria for decent work, thereby enhancing employees' perceptions of their work.
- (3) H3: Perceived decent work mediates the relationship between HPWS and employees' subjective well-being. This hypothesis suggests that the positive impact of HPWS on SWB is partially explained by its influence on perceived decent work, highlighting the importance of decent work as a mechanism through which HPWS affects employee well-being.
- (4) H4: Supervisor support moderates the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work. This hypothesis proposes that the strength of the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work is contingent on the level of supervisor support, with higher levels of support leading to a stronger positive relationship.

By testing these hypotheses, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on HPWS, SWB, decent work, and supervisor support, while providing practical insights for organizations seeking to improve employee well-being and performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design for this study is quantitative, utilizing a questionnaire survey as the primary data collection instrument. This approach is deemed appropriate given the need to collect standardized data from a large sample of in-service employees in Chinese steel structure enterprises. The questionnaire was designed to capture various constructs relevant to the study, including High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), perceived decent work, supervisor support, job satisfaction, and job engagement. By administering the questionnaire to a broad audience, the study aims to establish generalizable findings that can be applied to the broader population of employees in the Chinese steel structure industry. The selection of a quantitative research design is supported by the need for objectivity and precision in measuring the relationships between the variables of interest. As Sun and Zuo (2024a) note, quantitative research is particularly suited to situations where the researcher aims to test specific hypotheses or explore cause-and-effect relationships (p. 35). In this study, the hypotheses are grounded in existing theory and research, and the quantitative design allows for the rigorous testing of these hypotheses through statistical analysis.

3.2 Sampling Method

The sampling method employed in this study is convenience sampling. This method was chosen due to its practicality and efficiency in reaching a large number of participants in a relatively short period of time. The survey was conducted using Wenjuanxing, an online survey platform that is widely used in China for conducting research surveys. The link to the questionnaire was distributed through WeChat, a popular social media platform in China, to in-service employees in Chinese steel structure enterprises. Convenience sampling, while not as rigorous as other sampling methods such as random sampling, is often used in exploratory or preliminary studies where the primary goal is to obtain a general understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Sun & Zuo, 2024b). In this case, the study aims to explore the relationships between HPWS, perceived decent work, supervisor support, job satisfaction, and job engagement among employees in the Chinese steel structure industry. Given the exploratory nature of the study, convenience sampling is deemed appropriate. A total of 500 questionnaires were collected through this method. To ensure the quality of the data, the questionnaires were carefully screened for completeness and validity. Any questionnaires that were incomplete or contained

inconsistent responses were eliminated. After this screening process, 447 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis. This sample size is considered adequate for conducting the statistical analyses planned for this study.

3.3 Data Collection

The questionnaire used in this study was designed based on existing scales in the literature. This approach ensures that the items included in the questionnaire are valid and reliable measures of the constructs being studied. The scales for HPWS, perceived decent work, supervisor support, job satisfaction, and job engagement were selected based on their widespread use and demonstrated validity in previous research. Specifically, the HPWS scale was adapted from Edgar et al. (2021), who developed a comprehensive measure of HPWS that includes various practices such as employee training, performance appraisal, and compensation systems. The perceived decent work scale was based on the work of Duffy et al. (2017), who defined decent work as work that is productive, delivers a fair income, ensures security in the workplace, and provides opportunities for personal growth and development. The supervisor support scale was adapted from Rhoades et al. (2001), who developed a measure of perceived supervisor support that includes items related to the supervisor's availability, helpfulness, and fairness. The job satisfaction scale was based on the work of Brayfield et al. (1992), who developed a widely used measure of overall job satisfaction. Finally, the job engagement scale was adapted from Schaufeli et al. (2006), who developed the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to measure the three dimensions of engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. All items in the questionnaire were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This scale was chosen to allow participants to express their level of agreement with each item in a more nuanced way than a binary yes/no or agree/disagree format. The use of a Likert scale also facilitates the calculation of statistical measures such as mean scores and standard deviations, which are essential for the subsequent data analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire survey were analyzed using SPSS 27.0 and Mplus 7.4 statistical software. These software packages were chosen for their powerful statistical capabilities and their ability to handle large datasets efficiently. The data analysis process consisted of several steps, each designed to test the proposed hypotheses and explore the relationships between the variables of interest. The first step in the data analysis process was to conduct descriptive statistics. This involved calculating the mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions for each of the variables included in the study. Descriptive statistics provide a general overview of the data, allowing the researcher to identify any outliers, skewness, or other distributional issues that may affect the subsequent analyses. Next, a correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the variables. Correlation analysis is a statistical technique that measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. By calculating the correlation coefficients for each pair of variables, the researcher can determine which variables are related to each other and the strength of these relationships. This information is crucial for understanding the potential causal mechanisms underlying the relationships between HPWS, perceived decent work, supervisor support, job satisfaction, and job engagement. Reliability analysis was also conducted to assess the internal consistency of the scales used in the study. Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure over time or across different samples. In this study, reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which measures the degree to which the items in a scale are interrelated. A high alpha coefficient indicates that the items in the scale are measuring the same construct and are therefore reliable. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to validate the factorial structure of the scales used in the study. CFA is a statistical technique that tests the hypothesis that a set of observed variables can be explained by a smaller number of unobserved (latent) variables. In this study, CFA was used to confirm that the items in each scale loaded onto their respective latent variables, providing evidence for the

validity of the scales. Finally, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. SEM is a multivariate statistical technique that allows the researcher to test complex models that include multiple dependent and independent variables, as well as latent variables. In this study, SEM was used to examine the relationships between HPWS, perceived decent work, supervisor support, job satisfaction, and job engagement. Specifically, the study tested whether HPWS and perceived decent work had a direct effect on job satisfaction and job engagement, and whether supervisor support moderated these relationships. The results of the SEM analysis provide insights into the causal mechanisms underlying the relationships between these variables, allowing the researcher to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of HPWS and perceived decent work in promoting job satisfaction and engagement among employees in Chinese steel structure enterprises.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The study involved a sample of 447 in-service employees from Chinese steel structure enterprises. Table 4.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	192	43%
	Female	255	57%
Age	Below 25 years	56	12.5%
	25-35 years	264	59%
	36-45 years	89	20%
	Above 45 years	38	8.5%
Education	High school or below	32	7.2%
	Bachelor's degree	323	72.4%
	Master's degree or above	92	20.4%
Position	General employee	339	75.8%
	Grassroots supervisor	73	16.4%
	Middle-level manager	35	7.7%

As shown in Table 4.1, the sample was nearly evenly split between males and females, with a slight majority being female (57%). The majority of the participants were aged between 25 and 35 years (59%), followed by those aged 36-45 years (20%). In terms of education, the largest group had a bachelor's degree (72.4%), while the smallest group had high school education or below (7.2%). Most participants were general employees (75.8%), with fewer being grassroots supervisors (16.4%) or middle-level managers (7.7%).

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.2 presents the correlation matrix for the main variables in the study.

Table 4.2: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. HPWS	-	0.437**	0.420**	0.356**
2. Perceived decent work	0.437**	-	0.669**	0.605**
3. Job satisfaction	0.420**	0.669**	-	0.712**
4. Job engagement	0.356**	0.605**	0.712**	-

Note: ** p < 0.01

As shown in Table 4.2, there were significant positive correlations between all the main variables in the study. HPWS was positively correlated with perceived decent work ($r = 0.437, p < 0.01$), job satisfaction ($r = 0.420, p < 0.01$), and job engagement ($r = 0.356, p < 0.01$). Perceived decent work was also positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = 0.669, p < 0.01$) and job engagement ($r = 0.605, p < 0.01$). Job satisfaction and job engagement were highly correlated with each other ($r = 0.712, p < 0.01$).

4.3 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Table 4.3 presents the reliability and validity statistics for the scales used in the study.

Table 4.3: Reliability and Validity Statistics

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
HPWS	0.896	2.014	0.967	0.959	0.058	0.046
Perceived decent work	0.857	2.341	0.951	0.942	0.065	0.052
Job satisfaction	0.929	1.987	0.971	0.963	0.055	0.043
Job engagement	0.903	2.105	0.965	0.956	0.060	0.047

As shown in Table 4.3, all scales had high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.857 to 0.929. Confirmatory factor analysis supported the construct validity of the scales, with good fit indices. The χ^2/df values were below the recommended threshold of 3, indicating a good fit between the model and the data. The CFI and TLI values were above the recommended threshold of 0.90, further supporting the validity of the scales. The RMSEA and SRMR values were also within acceptable ranges, providing additional evidence for the validity of the scales.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

4.4.1 Hypothesis 1

Structural equation modeling was employed to rigorously test Hypothesis 1, which postulated that high-performance work systems (HPWS) would exert a notable positive influence on employees' job satisfaction and job engagement. The results, as delineated in Table 4.4, offer compelling support for this hypothesis.

Table 4.4: Results of Structural Equation Modeling Analysis for Hypothesis 1

Path	Standardized Coefficient (β)	p-value
HPWS → Job satisfaction	0.547	<0.01
HPWS → Job engagement	0.453	<0.01

Table 4.4 reveals that HPWS has a substantial and statistically significant positive effect on job satisfaction, with a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.547 and a p-value below 0.01. Similarly, the impact of HPWS on job engagement is also markedly positive, with a β of 0.453 and a p-value well below the conventional threshold of 0.01. These findings underscore the critical role of HPWS in enhancing employees' work-related attitudes and behaviors. The strong relationships suggest that organizations implementing HPWS are likely to witness heightened levels of job satisfaction and engagement among their workforce, which are crucial for sustaining organizational performance and employee well-being.

4.4.2 Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 proposed that HPWS would positively and significantly influence employees' perceptions of decent work. The regression analysis results, presented in Table 4.5, provide clear evidence to support this proposition.

Table 4.5: Results of Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 2

Predictor	Standardized Coefficient (β)	p-value
HPWS	0.566	<0.01

The analysis indicates that HPWS has a robust and statistically significant impact on perceived decent work, with a β of 0.566 and a p-value less than 0.01. This result highlights the importance of HPWS in shaping employees' assessments of whether their work meets the criteria of decent work, which encompasses various aspects such as fair pay, job security, and work-life balance. The finding implies that organizations that adopt HPWS are more likely to

create an environment where employees feel that their work is valued and respects their rights and dignity.

4.4.3 Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 tested the mediating role of perceived decent work in the relationship between HPWS and both job satisfaction and job engagement. The bootstrap analysis results, outlined in Table 4.6, offer persuasive evidence for the mediation effect.

Table 4.6: Results of Bootstrap Analysis for Hypothesis 3

Mediation Path	Indirect Effect	95% Confidence Interval
HPWS → Perceived decent work → Job satisfaction	0.458	[0.329, 0.674]
HPWS → Perceived decent work → Job engagement	0.451	[0.328, 0.692]

The analysis reveals that perceived decent work significantly mediates the relationship between HPWS and job satisfaction, with an indirect effect of 0.458 and a 95% confidence interval that does not include zero ([0.329, 0.674]). Similarly, perceived decent work also significantly mediates the relationship between HPWS and job engagement, with an indirect effect of 0.451 and a confidence interval that excludes zero ([0.328, 0.692]). These results suggest that the positive impact of HPWS on job satisfaction and engagement is partly explained by employees' perceptions of their work as decent. In other words, HPWS contribute to job satisfaction and engagement indirectly by fostering a sense of decent work among employees.

4.4.4 Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 examined whether supervisor support would moderate the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work. However, the regression analysis results, as shown in Table 4.7, do not support this hypothesis.

Table 4.7: Results of Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 4

Interaction Term	Standardized Coefficient (β)	p-value
HPWS x Supervisor support	0.044	>0.10

The analysis indicates that the interaction term between HPWS and supervisor support is not statistically significant, with a β of 0.044 and a p-value greater than 0.10. This finding suggests that the level of support provided by supervisors does not significantly alter the extent to which HPWS influence employees' perceptions of decent work. Although supervisor support is generally recognized as an important factor in the workplace, it appears that, in this context, it does not play a significant moderating role in the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work. This result may reflect the relative strength of HPWS in shaping employees' perceptions, or it may suggest that other factors, such as organizational culture or job design, play a more prominent role in determining perceptions of decent work.

5. Discussion

5.1 Impact of HPWS on Subjective Well-Being

The results of this study provide robust evidence that High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) positively influence employees' subjective well-being, specifically through enhanced job satisfaction and engagement. This finding aligns with and extends the existing literature, which has consistently demonstrated the favorable outcomes associated with HPWS, including improved employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance (Jiang et al., 2012). By implementing comprehensive HPWS, organizations can foster an environment that not only promotes productivity but also nurtures employee well-being. This dual focus is crucial in today's competitive business environment, where employee engagement and satisfaction are key drivers of organizational success (Sun & Zuo, 2023).

The specific HPWS practices identified in this study, such as training and development, performance-based compensation, and employee involvement in decision-making, are particularly potent in enhancing subjective well-being. These practices not only provide employees with the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their jobs effectively but also signal a commitment to their growth and development. By involving employees in decision-making processes, organizations demonstrate a respect for their opinions and contributions, further boosting their sense of value and engagement.

5.2 Mediating Role of Perceived Decent Work

The mediation analysis revealed that perceived decent work plays a crucial role in the relationship between HPWS and employees' subjective well-being. This finding contributes to the theoretical framework of work psychology by introducing decent work as a mediator that explains how HPWS influence employee outcomes. It suggests that the positive effects of HPWS are partially transmitted through employees' perceptions of decent work, which encompasses factors such as job security, fair compensation, and respectful treatment (International Labour Organization, 2019). The finding that HPWS practices contribute to employees' perceptions of decent work highlights the importance of these practices in shaping the overall work environment. By implementing HPWS, organizations can create a work environment that is not only productive but also fair and respectful. This, in turn, enhances employees' job satisfaction and engagement, as they feel valued and appreciated for their contributions.

5.3 Moderating Role of Supervisor Support

While supervisor support was expected to moderate the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work, the results of this study did not support this hypothesis. This finding suggests that the positive effects of HPWS may be sufficiently strong to overshadow the potential moderating influence of supervisor support. In other words, HPWS practices themselves may create a supportive work environment that reduces the need for additional support from supervisors. However, it is important to acknowledge that supervisor support remains a critical factor in employee well-being, even if it did not moderate the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work in this particular study. Supervisor support has been shown to influence a wide range of employee outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Therefore, organizations should continue to invest in training and developing their supervisors to ensure that they provide the necessary support and guidance to their employees.

5.4 Practical Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications for organizations, particularly those in the Chinese steel structure industry. First and foremost, organizations should prioritize the implementation of HPWS to enhance employees' subjective well-being and job performance. This can be achieved by designing comprehensive training and development programs that cater to the specific needs of employees, implementing performance-based compensation systems that reward and recognize employee contributions, and involving employees in decision-making processes to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility. Secondly, organizations should focus on creating a decent work environment that values employee contributions and respects their rights and freedoms. This can be accomplished by clearly communicating organizational values and goals, ensuring fair and transparent compensation practices, and providing opportunities for employee growth and development. By fostering a decent work environment, organizations can not only enhance employee well-being but also improve their overall performance and competitiveness. Finally, although supervisor support did not moderate the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work in this study, it remains an important factor in employee well-being. Organizations should provide supervisors with the necessary training and resources to enhance their supportiveness and responsiveness to employee needs. This can include training on effective leadership and communication skills,

as well as providing access to resources such as employee assistance programs and mental health support.

5.5 Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between HPWS, perceived decent work, and employee well-being, it is not without its limitations. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small and limited to in-service employees in Chinese steel structure enterprises. This limits the generalizability of the findings to other industries and regions. Future research could address this limitation by expanding the sample size and including employees from diverse industries and geographical locations to enhance the external validity of the results. Secondly, the study adopted a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships between variables. While the findings suggest that HPWS positively influence employee well-being through perceived decent work, a longitudinal design would be necessary to confirm the causality of these relationships. Future research could track changes in employees' perceptions and attitudes over time to better understand the dynamic nature of these relationships. Finally, this study focused on the mediating role of perceived decent work and the moderating role of supervisor support. While these variables provided valuable insights into the impact of HPWS on employee well-being, other potential mediators and moderators may exist. Future research could explore the role of organizational culture, leadership style, and employee-organization fit in shaping the relationship between HPWS and employee outcomes. By examining a wider range of variables, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships that govern employee well-being and performance in organizations. In addition, future research could also delve deeper into the specific HPWS practices that are most effective in promoting employee well-being. For example, while this study examined the overall impact of HPWS, future research could focus on the relative effectiveness of different HPWS practices, such as flexible work arrangements, employee recognition programs, and career development opportunities. By identifying the most effective practices, organizations can tailor their HPWS to better meet the needs and expectations of their employees. Furthermore, the role of individual differences in moderating the impact of HPWS on employee well-being should be explored. Employees have different needs, preferences, and values, which may influence how they perceive and respond to HPWS practices. Future research could examine the moderating effects of individual differences, such as personality traits, work values, and career orientations, on the relationship between HPWS and employee well-being. This would provide organizations with a more nuanced understanding of how to design and implement HPWS that are tailored to the unique needs of their employees. Lastly, the impact of HPWS on employee well-being could also be examined in the context of different cultural and economic backgrounds. The Chinese steel structure industry, which was the focus of this study, has its own unique characteristics and challenges. Future research could explore the impact of HPWS on employee well-being in other industries and cultural contexts to determine whether the findings of this study are universal or context-specific. This would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between HPWS and employee well-being across different cultural and economic landscapes.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

The present study has delved deeply into the intricate relationship between High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and employees' subjective well-being within the context of Chinese steel structure enterprises. Through rigorous empirical analysis, several significant findings have emerged. Firstly, the study confirms that HPWS exerts a positive influence on job satisfaction and job engagement among employees. This finding aligns with the broader literature on HPWS, which suggests that such systems can enhance employee outcomes by fostering a supportive and enabling work environment. Secondly, the study reveals that perceived decent work acts as a crucial mediator in the relationship between HPWS and employee well-being. This finding

underscores the importance of employees' perceptions of their work as decent and meaningful in determining their overall satisfaction and engagement. However, contrary to initial expectations, supervisor support did not emerge as a significant moderator of the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work. This result suggests that while supervisor support is undoubtedly important for employee well-being, it may not play a pivotal role in moderating the specific relationship between HPWS and perceptions of decent work.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

The findings of this study make several important theoretical contributions to the field of organizational psychology and management. Firstly, the study extends the existing literature on HPWS by demonstrating their positive impact on employee well-being in the specific context of Chinese steel structure enterprises. This contributes to the generalizability of HPWS research across different industries and cultural contexts. Secondly, the identification of perceived decent work as a mediator between HPWS and employee well-being offers a novel perspective on the mechanisms through which HPWS operate. This finding suggests that the benefits of HPWS are not directly transferred to employee well-being but are rather mediated by employees' perceptions of their work. This insight has important implications for understanding the complex processes that underlie the relationship between organizational practices and employee outcomes. Finally, the study's finding that supervisor support did not moderate the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work challenges some existing assumptions in the literature. This result highlights the need for further research to explore the boundary conditions and contingent factors that influence the effectiveness of supervisor support as a moderator.

6.3 Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study have several implications for organizations seeking to enhance employee well-being through HPWS. Firstly, organizations should prioritize the implementation of HPWS that are tailored to their specific context and needs. By doing so, they can create a supportive work environment that fosters job satisfaction and engagement among employees. Secondly, organizations should focus on enhancing employees' perceptions of their work as decent and meaningful. This can be achieved by providing opportunities for skill development, offering fair compensation and benefits, and promoting a positive work culture. By addressing these factors, organizations can strengthen the mediating role of perceived decent work in the relationship between HPWS and employee well-being. Finally, while supervisor support may not have moderated the relationship between HPWS and perceived decent work in this study, it remains an important factor in promoting employee well-being. Therefore, organizations should continue to invest in training and development programs for supervisors to enhance their supportiveness and effectiveness in managing their teams.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small and limited to Chinese steel structure enterprises. Future research could expand the sample size and include organizations from different industries and cultural backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the study adopted a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to infer causality. A longitudinal design would allow for a more robust examination of the temporal relationships between HPWS, perceived decent work, and employee well-being. Thirdly, while perceived decent work emerged as a significant mediator in this study, other potential mediators and moderators may exist. Future research could explore additional factors that may influence the relationship between HPWS and employee well-being, such as organizational culture, job demands, and employee personality traits.

6.5 The Role of Context in HPWS Effectiveness

An important consideration in future research is the role of context in shaping the effectiveness of HPWS. The findings of this study are specific to Chinese steel structure enterprises, and it is likely that the relationship between HPWS and employee well-being may differ in other contexts. For example, cultural factors such as collectivism and power distance may influence how employees perceive and respond to HPWS. Future research could examine the moderating role of cultural factors on the relationship between HPWS and employee well-being to gain a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of these systems across different cultural contexts.

6.6 Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study have important implications for policy and practice in the field of organizational management. Policymakers and practitioners should recognize the importance of HPWS in promoting employee well-being and take steps to implement such systems in their organizations. This may involve revising recruitment and selection processes, providing training and development opportunities, and fostering a positive work culture. Additionally, policymakers should consider the role of perceived decent work in mediating the relationship between HPWS and employee well-being. By addressing factors such as job security, fair compensation, and work-life balance, policymakers can enhance employees' perceptions of their work and, in turn, promote their overall well-being.

6.7 Conclusion and Final Thoughts

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the relationship between HPWS and employees' subjective well-being in Chinese steel structure enterprises. The findings suggest that HPWS have a positive impact on job satisfaction and job engagement, and this impact is mediated by perceived decent work. While supervisor support did not emerge as a significant moderator, it remains an important factor in promoting employee well-being. The study's theoretical contributions, practical implications, and limitations highlight the need for further research to expand our understanding of the complex relationships between organizational practices, employee perceptions, and well-being outcomes. As organizations continue to strive for improved employee well-being, the insights provided by this study offer a valuable starting point for future research and practice in the field of organizational management.

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