Bulletin of Business and Economics, 12(4), 361-375
https://bbejournal.com
https://doi.org/10.61506/01.00137

Retorting the Unrequited: Connecting the Threads between Thriving at Work, Psychological Capital and Individual's Innovative Behavior

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Abstract
This study aims to examine the effect of thriving at work and psychological capital on individual innovative behavior, precisely centering on the mediating role of employee engagement within the telecommunication services and wireless communication business environment. The 300 front-level employees of the telecom firms are being targeted for the study sample from four telecom and wireless communication firms using a non-probability snowball sampling technique. Questionnaires were used to collect the data, and the data was then analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The validity, including convergent and discriminant, was then measured through individual and nested Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Path analysis via SEM was employed to test the hypotheses. The findings demonstrated that thriving at work and psychological capital have a positive impact on individual innovative behavior. Results showed that employee engagement acts as a mediator in transmitting the effects of thriving at work and psychological capital on innovative individual behavior. Psychological capital appears to be an essential resource for organizations. Once individuals start performing their duties, managers are advised to improve their psychological capital in a supportive manner. This can be done by motivating and encouraging them to trigger a higher level of engagement which ultimately affects individual innovative behaviour of employees.

Keywords: Psychological Capital, Thriving at Work, Employee Engagement, Individual Innovative Behavior

1. Introduction

As of today, firms to stay competitive are always ready to take risks and maintain their competitive edge. Amongst various factors, the Individual Innovative Behaviour (IIB) is an essential component that not only helps a firm to adapt to environmental changes but also to maintain its market competitiveness (Parahoo et al., 2017). Existing literature also shows concern with employee innovation and according to some studies, the Psychological Capital (PC) of employees is positively linked with employees' innovative behavior (Liu et al., 2020; Tsegaye et al., 2020). Positive behavior spills out the enthusiasm toward work that leads to exemplary work performance. Researchers have tried to devote increased attention to the psychological aspects that help generate inventive behavior, suggesting that innovative behaviors emerge not only from a person's natural looks but also from an employee's job perspective (Hammad, 2023). Hence, PC is an essential aspect that helps organizations maintain their competitive advantage. PC was originally meant for businesses and employees, to explore or investigate individual mental power. To sustain the globally competitive nature, businesses need to involve innovative individuals (Hu et al., 2023). Moreover, researchers have tried to devote increased attention to the psychological aspects that help generate inventive behaviors, suggesting that innovative behaviors emerge from a person's natural looks and an employee's job perspective. Literature on this also argues that the innovation ability of employees can be influenced by firms' culture, hence, it is important to analyze which factors are responsible for building such behaviors (Shah et al., 2019).

Employee Engagement (EE) is formally defined as the direction and strength of intellectual, emotional, and cognitive energies because multiple energies are needed for individuals to take on the tough process of innovation. Fernandez and Quines (2023) acknowledged that the myriad human and contextual elements that drive EE have largely gone unstudied in the context of innovative behaviour/s. According to Johnston and Bate (2013) and Rogozińska-Pawełczyk (2023) employee innovation must be a priority of a firm as it helps in building innovative work behavior. This type of behavior has the potential to earn a competitive edge and work satisfaction that ultimately uplifts the overall performance of an individual and firm.

In the present environment, organizations are obliged to have a thriving workforce to achieve sustainability and maintain their competitive superiority. However, this needs a series of effective strategies because it not only helps firms to reduce negative effects such as disengagement, demotivation, stress, burnout, absenteeism, etc. (Prem et al., 2017). It is also argued that thriving can be linked to a psychological state that helps employees undergo a transition that eventually knocks up a sense of vitality. Previous studies also highlight that thriving is an efficient tool to subjugate various factors that might harm the workforce. Nevertheless, recent studies also indicate that Thriving at Work (TW) is essential for organizations as it comes up with affirmative outcomes such as innovative behavior, job satisfaction, employee engagement, high job satisfaction, etc. Furthermore, Individuals thriving comprises genuine feelings and enthusiasm to participate in a particular activity. It is a process of individual development that includes both learning and vitality (Wu & Nguyen, 2019).

As discussed, innovation is an ultimate goal of firms to gain success eventually and many of the firms admit the need to be proactive to stay competitive. Although studies exist that focus on innovative behavior in general, however, literature seems to be scarce from an employee's perspective, especially in the telecommunication sector (Novitasari et al., 2020). Thus, a comprehensive study is needed to shed light on potential factors that help in forming innovative behaviour. However, it must be noticed that although literature views innovation as a synonym of creativity, however, in the present study, the concept of innovative behavior is different from the creativity phenomenon. Since, individuals are the key drivers for executing changes, optimum management, and innovations. Creativity is highly tied to innovative behavior. Considering this and other substantial advantages of innovation, factors that promote the innovative behavior of employees must be investigated thoroughly.

Previous studies have focused on measuring the direct effects of PC on the innovative behaviors of employees (Hammad, 2023) and have shown inconsistent results. Variable like TW is not clubbed with PC to reinforce the IIB as mandated by

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Utama et al. (2023). Previous studies focused on studying variables like leadership styles, autonomy, support, and their effects on creativity, so by adding TW as an independent variable with PC, in our model we will cover the gap that exists in the present literature. Moreover, we have placed EE as a mediating variable between PC, TW, and IIB as pointed out by Kleine et al. (2019) in their meta-analysis to eliminate the inconsistencies in the previous literature regarding the relationship of PC and TW with IIB.

Specifically talking about the telecommunication sector, in terms of innovation and growth, Pakistan's telecom sector is one of the most prominent sectors in the country. The telecommunications sector consists of three basic sub-sectors: telecom equipment, telecom services, and wireless communication. The major industry segments within these sub-sectors include the following: wireless communications, communications equipment, processing systems, and products. Currently, there are four cellular mobile operators in Pakistan i.e. Telenor Pakistan, Pakistan Mobile Communication Limited (PMCL/Jazz), PTML (Ufone), and China Mobile Pakistan (CMPak/Zong) are providing services using GSM, WCDMA LTE, etc. The market size is estimated at US$ 4.52 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 5.32 billion by 2029. The growth can be attributable to the development of Pakistan's 3G, 4G, and 5G services. Pakistan's telecommunications sector has changed into a thriving sector in the last two decades as a result of numerous business characteristics, like foreign direct investment, increased earnings rates, and job creation to boost rural populations with minor and sustained start-ups. However, the full potential of this sector's innovativeness has yet to be achieved due to a lack of measures for analyzing and managing the elements that influence innovation. By linking the sector, we can say that PCs can influence employees' innovative performance and behavior. Optimistic employees, for example, are more willing to believe in their organization and are more likely to feel comfortable, which pushes them to execute their duties more efficiently (Mutonyi, 2021). Moreover, an organization's success nowadays is not exclusively dependent upon the number of traditional assets, but also, to a large extent, on the organization's ability to consolidate knowledge and expertise such as innovative employees (Shah et al., 2019). Thus, based on the aforementioned argument, it is interesting to analyze the role of PC and TW in IIB in the presence of a mediator i.e. EE in the context of Pakistan's telecommunication sector. We posed the following questions for our research i.e. what is the effect of PC on IIB? What is the effect of TW on IIB? What is the effect of PC on EE? Is there any mediating effect of EE between TW and IIB? Is there any mediating effect of EE between PC and IIB? Based on above cited questions our objectives are to investigate the effect of PC on IIB, investigate the effect of TW on IIB, investigate the effect of TW and PC on EE, investigate the mediating effect of EE between TW and IIB, and investigate the mediating effect of EE between PC and IIB.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Theoretical Framework (Leader Member-Exchange Theory)

The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory is a common approach within the field of organizational culture, which concentrates on the nature of the interaction between a leader and followers. LMX theory was derived from the theory previously known as Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL). Furthermore, the LMX approach is rooted in the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Role Theory (RT). Many researchers have applied this theory to conceptualize their studies on different aspects of human resource practices including employee resilience, employee work engagement, employee performance, and employee creativity. As per LMX theory, individuals with high exchange relationships, described by high levels of understanding and respect, trustworthiness, and affection, have access to a wealth of resources, including timely support, difficult tasks, and access to the leader's social network. Limiting workforce or individuals with low LMX do not acquire those rewards, and their interaction with the manager or exchange relationship is followed by low degrees of trust, involvement, and support. LMX tells us how leaders build up different types of exchange relationships with followers. These exchange relationships emphasize significant leader and member attitudes and behaviors. Supervisors and subordinate's relationship can be studied by LMX theory.

2.2. Thriving at Work and Individual Innovative Behavior

IIB refers to "new and useful ideas, processes, or procedures that aim to achieve within a work role, group, or organization" (Riaz et al., 2019). Such behavior easily detects the problem and comes up with creative solutions (Hammad, 2023). Meanwhile, TW acts as a tool to monitor individuals' development which helps them to become effective and adapt in the workplace. It is argued by the researchers that individuals, who experience thriving, become motivated and start exhibiting IIB. This also encourages them to go beyond their responsibilities. This is due to vitality which develops a desire to perform a behavior that not only triggers the ways of learning but also makes it enjoyable which leads to the desired goal along with personal recognition (Norouzinik et al., 2022).

Prior studies also claim that the IIB is associated with learning and development which helps individuals to recognize problems and propose counter-solutions to address them timely. In this whole process, individuals are expected to grasp expertise to understand the processes, identify issues, and find creative and novel solutions. Secondly, individuals must feel the energy to show devotion while implementing new procedures. Also, psychological and social resources thrive which enables IIB of employees. Studies also support the notion that there is a link between TW and IIB (Mishra et al., 2019).

Thus, we hypothesize that:

H_1: *Thriving at work has a positive relationship with individual innovative behavior.*

2.3. Psychological Capital and Individual Innovative Behaviour

Prior researchers evaluated the relationship between PC and IIB. According to the studies, employees who have a higher level of PC, often spill a stronger level of IIB (Slåtten et al., 2019). According to a prior study PC significantly affects IIB directly. Similarly, Slåtten et al. (2019) also evaluated the direct relationship between PC and IIB and documented significant and positive findings. Luthans and Yousaf-Morgan (2017) also explained that the key to achieving a competitive edge is an individual's PC as it tends to boost employee morale which in turn affects positive attitude that ultimately leads to increased productivity (Fernandez & Quines, 2023). All in all, the studies concluded that PC offers essential repositories of psychological components which in return bring innovative work ideas that help employees to improve their performance. Thus, we hypothesize that:

H_2: *Psychological capital has a positive effect on individual innovative behavior.*

2.4. Psychological Capital and Employee Engagement

According to Youssef and Luthans (2007), PC resources produce positive work-related outcomes; EE, work performance, productivity, organizational commitment, etc. Fernandez and Quines (2023) claimed that either PC as a whole or each dimension is significantly associated with EE. It shows that employees who exhibit a stronger aspect of PC, tend to be more indulged and motivated in their duties (Gupta et al., 2017). Similarly, Bakker et al. (2011) argued that organizations to perform efficiently, should not only stick to highly qualified recruits. Firms must focus on employee empowerment to unleash their abilities. Studies from Karatepe and Avci (2017) also encompass the significance of PC in successful task performance which is the outcome of high EE. Similarly, Avey et al. (2010) stipulated that employees having a high level of PC, produce positive emotions which makes them more engaged with their work. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H_3: *Psychological capital has a positive effect on employee engagement.*

2.5. Thriving at Work and Employee Engagement

Although TW and EE theoretically overlap at some point fundamentally, they are two distinct concepts. Both the constructs have the same aspect of energy, which is rigorous and enthusiastic, respectively. However, TW includes knowledge, whereas EE includes absorption and dedication. Empirical evidence has shown that TW has numerous positive individual and workplace outcomes due to its vitality and learning features; such as employee productivity and self-development, positive and productive behavior, and career decision-making (Jiang, 2017). TW has also been reported to decrease turnover intention, stress, and fatigue. EE and vitality share a fundamental similarity in that both concepts as vitality is an important component of the workplace (Leiter & Bakker, 2010). The distinction between the two notions, on the other hand, is based on the creation and consumption of resources. EE refers to how eager individuals are to use their skills and abilities in the workplace (Fernandez & Quines, 2023). Whereas flourishment refers to how much people believe that their jobs provide them opportunities for personal improvement that are dependent on resource creation. A thrived employee feels energized when he/she faces difficult tasks (Abid et al., 2018), vigor is represented by cognitive and physiological experiences that compel a person to live with vitality and intent. It entails moving on in life with pleasure, intensity, and energy. Vital people do not work half-heartedly; they are dedicated and passionate in pursuit of their goals. Hence based on the discussion, we hypothesized that:

H_4: *There is a positive impact of thriving at work on employee engagement.*

2.6. Employee Engagement and Individual Innovative Behaviour

There exist many studies that outshined the positive impact of a workgroup on organizational outcomes; task performance, employee initiatives, job performance, and IIB (Bakker & Bal, 2010). It is argued that EE built the capacity of employees due to which they become more creative with their work. It is also argued that employees when are more engaged with their work, they produce at full capacity and solve problems efficiently. This is due to the emerging positivity that enhances their creative side (Saks, 2019). Moreover, this also transforms the ability of an individual through which he/she intends to explore new ideas and apply them to work. Isen (2001) also argued that when you show full engagement with your work, a positive feeling is generated that further makes individuals more flexible and innovative. This leads to the hypothesis:

H_5: *Employee engagement has a positive relationship with individual innovative behavior.*

2.7. Employee Engagement as a Mediator between Thriving at Work and Individual Innovative Behaviour

We anticipate that TW will be a major stimulus for IIB. As previously stated, individuals need vitality to succeed at work. Employees who feel alive at work are more likely to participate and perform unique tasks (Wang et al., 2019). Entrepreneurs must not only generate new ideas but also make an effort to spread such ideas inside the corporation. Individuals' TW is also dependent on their ability to learn. Employees who believe that they are growing and progressing during work are more likely to be involved in addressing issues and proposing solutions (Wang et al., 2019). Thriving provides a basis for IIB and strengthens the position of innovative activities. Furthermore, research shows that the scope and nature of employees' learning experiences are related to the intensity of EE (Shin et al., 2017). As a result, a person who thrives at work will be more engaged and display more inventive behavior. So, we hypothesize that,

H_6: *Employee engagement mediates the relationship between thriving at work and individual innovative behaviour.*

2.8. Employee Engagement as a Mediator between Psychological Capital and Individual Innovative Behaviour

Scholars have emphasized the mediation function and strength of EE with workplace aspects such as work performance, satisfaction of employees, and effective supervisory assistance. Johnson and Jiang (2017) examined that EE positively affects IIB. Organizations that place a high value on innovation rely heavily on a self-motivated person who can maintain a positive attitude toward work, a strong sense of integrity, and devotion to a task. Employees who are highly engaged are often more likely to think creatively about how to solve problems and, as a result, display a significant amount of innovation. Previous studies support the positive linkage between PC and EE. On the contrary "self-efficacy, organizational-based self-esteem, and optimism constitute a distinctive contribution towards explaining the variance of EE. It is also argued that for front-line staff, engagement plays a partial mediating influence on the relationship between PC as well as perceived organizational support.
Thus, we hypothesized that:

H_7: *Employee engagement mediates the relationship between psychological capital and individual innovative behavior.*

Appendix 1 presents the findings from some of the latest studies on the subject of thriving at work. Based on our literature review and eventual development of hypotheses for empirical testing in this study, we proposed the research model as shown in the following Figure 1.

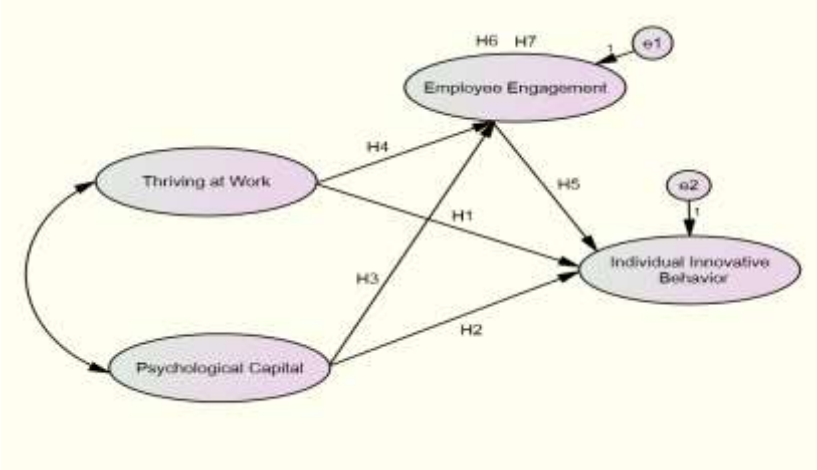

Figure-1: Research Model

3. Data and Methods

We used a positivist approach for this research. The deductive approach was used to test the theory because it is concerned with establishing hypotheses based on a theory and designing research procedures to evaluate the hypotheses. In this research, we used the existing knowledge to develop the hypotheses and test them. The quantitative research method is employed in this study to investigate the effects. This study is non-contrived since the results were gathered without any interaction with the natural environment. The unit of analysis is the front-line employees of telecom firms. Cross-sectional data was collected from the respondents. Data was gathered from current permanent employees of four telecom firms. Respondents were approached by the managers and individually for data collection.

Moreover, the non-probability snowball sampling technique is used in the study to collect data from the sampled population. In the current study, there are a total of four variables: PC, TW, EE, and IIB. Scales for each of the constructs were borrowed from prior studies. TW items are adopted from the study of Porath et al. (2012). The items for PC are adopted from Lorenz et al.'s (2016) study. The items for IIB are adopted from the study of Scott and Bruce (1994). The items for EE are adopted from the study of Karatepe and Karadas (2015). It is to be noted that data was gathered from permanent employees of four telecom firms. A total of three hundred questionnaires were distributed among participants and 235 were received from which 221 were usable for analysis. To examine the normality of the data, a variety of approaches including skewness and kurtosis, histograms, and outliers were applied. The validity, including convergent and discriminant validity, was then measured through individual and nested Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Path analysis via SEM was employed to test the hypotheses. Indices like GFI, $\chi 2/df$, CFI, NFI, and RMESA, were employed to evaluate the structural model.

4. Results

As a pre-condition for empirical analysis of underlying data, necessary normality tests were applied to data sampled in this empirical study. All of the indicators, namely, Skewness, Kurtosis, and VIF appeared to be within the allowed thresholds.

Table 1: Data Normality Statistics (N=221)

Constructs	Min	Max	Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE	Tolerance	VIF
TW	20.00	35.00	-0.14	0.16	-0.71	0.32	0.57	1.73
PC	17.00	35.00	-0.00	0.16	-0.33	0.32	0.79	1.25
EE	10.00	25.00	-0.51	0.16	-0.08	0.32	0.59	1.69
IIB	12.00	30.00	-0.38	0.16	-0.08	0.32	Dependent Variable	

Notes: *Tw=Thriving at Work; PC=Psychological Capital; EE= Employee Engagement; IIB= Individual Innovative Behavior; SE=Standard Error; VIF=Variance Inflationary Factor*

Table 1 provides information on the normality statistics of the data. After the removal of 14 outliers' the data became normal and was good for further analysis. The value for skewness of TW is -0.14, kurtosis of -0.71 and no multicollinearity was present with VIF is 1.73, Min= 20.00, Max=35.00, a skewness of -0.00, kurtosis of -0.33, Min=17.00, Max 35.00, and VIF is 1.25 for PC, a skewness of -0.51, kurtosis of -0.08, Min= 10.00, Max=25.00 and VIF is 1.54 for EE, a skewness of -0.38, and kurtosis of -0.08, Min=12.00, Max=30.00 for IIB.

4.1. Measurement Model

4.1.1. Reliability and Uni-dimensionality Checks

The Uni-dimensionality of the scale was evaluated using individual CFAs as presented in Table 2. In the initial run of CFA for each construct, a few items were removed because lower Factor Loadings (FL) were deleted. The NFI value indicated the fulfillment of the first method to fulfill the condition for convergent validity. Table 2 exhibits all the NFI values to be greater than 0.91. The second approach we used was that estimates of factor loadings should be ≥0.5, which supports the rule of convergent validity according to SEM literature. As can be seen in Table 2, all FLs are greater than 0.50, which provides backing for convergent validity.

Table 2: Individual CFA Indicators (N=221)

	Items	Unidimensionality					Convergent Validity		Reliability
Individual		χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA	NFI	FL (min-max)	α
TW	7	1.82	0.97	0.97	0.02	0.06	0.93	[0.51-0.58]	0.77
PC	7	2.17	0.96	0.95	0.03	0.07	0.91	[0.52-061]	0.76
EE	5	0.71	0.99	1.00	0.01	0.00	0.99	[0.51-0.68]	0.80
IIB	6	1.92	0.98	0.98	0.01	0.06	0.97	[0.57-0.66]	0.84
Nested	25	2.22	0.91	0.93	0.05	0.05	0.91	[0.52-0.84]	0.90

Notes: *Tw=Thriving at Work; PC=Psychological Capital; EE= Employee Engagement; IIB= Individual Innovative Behaviour*

Cronbach's Alfa in Table 2 shows high values of Cronbach's Alfa and are ≥ 0.7, which confirms that the items are error-free. The NFI, GFI, and CFI also showed acceptable values ≥ 0.90 and the Value of RMSEA≤ 0.08. The results of this process indicated that the data was overall fit to move further for a CFA which led further towards the possibility of overall model fit.
A covariance matrix was utilized to determine the findings of the four factors nested CFA once individual CFAs were completed. Few of the error terms were correlated to offer precise fit indices, such as e1↔e4 and e3↔e7 for TW, for PC e8↔e12 were correlated, for EE e18↔e19 correlated, for IIB e21↔e25 and e24↔e25 were correlated. The outcomes established that the items had been loaded into their latent variables properly. Once again, every value for the nested model fell inside the ranges as mandated by the SEM literature like

4.1.2. Discriminant and Convergent Validity Testing

We assessed discriminant validity by using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method, by taking the square root of AVE's values. The values can be seen in the diagonal of Table 4 and can be seen that all the values are greater than the corresponding correlation values, which establishes the discriminant validity.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity Check (Covariance among Latent Variables)

Constructs	TW	PC	EE	IIB	Mean	SD
TW	0.63†	0.42**	0.62**	0.61**	28.34	3.75
PC		0.57†	0.39**	0.53**	26.86	3.76
EE			0.63†	0.62**	19.81	3.36
IIB				0.65†	23.47	3.66

Notes: *Tw=Thriving at Work; PC=Psychological Capital; EE= Employee Engagement; IIB= Individual Innovative Behaviour; SD= Standard deviation; †= AVE Values*

5. Hypotheses Testing and Discussion of Results

5.1. Direct and Indirect Effects

Based on the framework, we proposed two models: the direct-effect-model and the indirect-effect-model, for hypothesis testing. To check the appropriate fit of both the structural models, various fit indices including chi-square ratio (χ^2/df); GFI, NFI, CFI, and RMSEA were considered which are recommended in SEM literature.

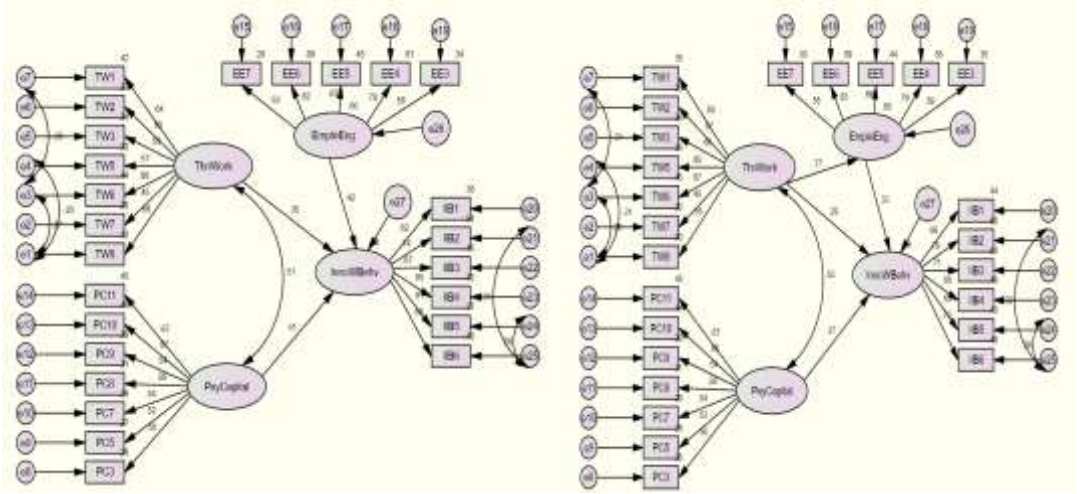

Figure 2: Direct and Indirect-Effect-Models for Mediation of Employee Engagement between Thriving at Work and Individual Innovative Behaviour

According to H_1, TW is positively related to IIB. Table 4 findings confirmed the hypothesis, showing that TW has a considerable effect on IIB (H_1: β=0.35, p<0.001), Thus H_1 is accepted. As H_4 stated that TW has a positive impact on EE, the results given in Table 4 indicate (H_4: β =0.72***, p<0.1), Thus H_4 is also accepted. If H_2 is β=0.40***, then H_2 is accepted. H_5 stated that EE has a positive and significant impact on IIB. By using the findings from Table 4 which again demonstrates (H_5: β=0.42, p<0.01), therefore H_5 also stands correct. H_3 stated that there is a positive effect of PC on EE (H_3: β=0.08***, p< 0.001), consequently, H_3 is also accepted. Moreover, H_6 and H_7 are about the mediation of EE among the relationship between TW and IIB, and PC and IIB.

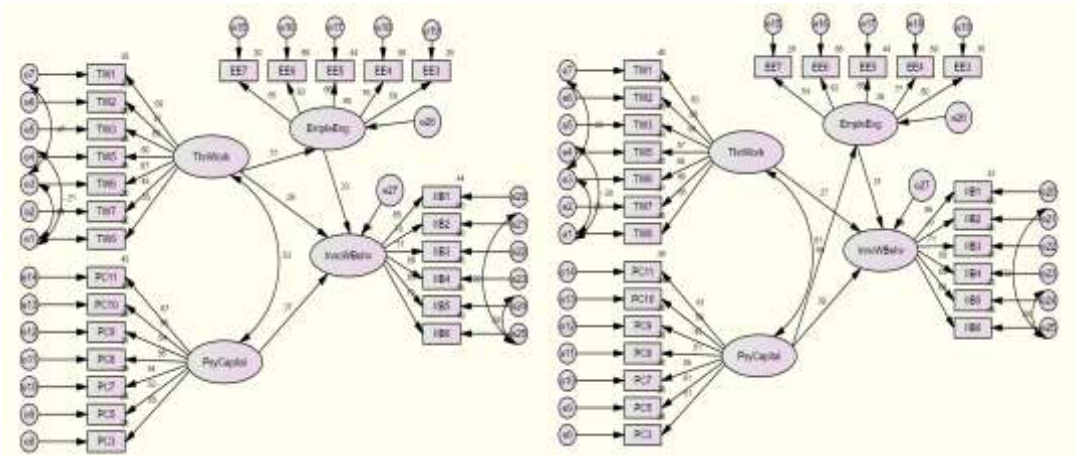

Figure-3: Direct and Indirect Effect Models for Mediation of Employee Engagement between Psychological Capital and Individual Innovative Behaviour

Table 3: SEM Analysis for Two Contending Models

	Direct effect model			Indirect effect model		
	B	S.E		*β*	S.E	
H_1: TW→ IIB	0.35***	0.08	Significant			
H_4: TW→ EE				0.72***	0.12	Significant
H_5: EE→ IIB	0.42***	0.08	Significant			
H_2: PC→ IIB	0.40***	0.11	Significant			
H_3: PC→ EE				0.08***	0.09	Significant
Model Comparison Indices between Direct and Indirect-Effect-Models for Mediation Analysis						
H_6:TW→EE→IIB						
	χ^2 *df* ratio=2.51; GFI=0.79; NFI=0.71; CFI=0.80; RSMEA=0.06; R^2 (IIB)=0.65			χ^2 *df* ratio=2.23; GFI=0.91; NFI=0.92; CFI=0.89; RSMEA=0.05; R^2 (IIB)=0.70		
H_7:PC→EE→ IIB	χ^2 *df* ratio=2.51; GFI=0.79; NFI=0.71; CFI=0.80; RSMEA=0.07; R^2 (IIB)=0.65			χ^2 *df* ratio=2.46; GFI=0.89; NFI=0.91; CFI=0.92; RSMEA=0.05; R^2 (IIB)=0.70		

Notes: *Tw=Thriving at Work; PC=Psychological Capital; EE= Employee Engagement; IIB= Individual Innovative Behaviour; SE= Standard Error; ***=p<0.001.*

We evaluated the direct effect model (route from TW to IIB, PC to IIB, and EE to IIB. and the indirect effect model (route from TW to EE and EE to IIB). It displays fit indices for the direct effect model i.e. χ/df ratio is 2.51, GFI is 0.79, NFI is 0.71, CFI is 0.80 and RSMEA is 0.83. The indirect effect model which includes mediating variables demonstrated fit indices i.e. χ^2/df ratio is 2.23, GFI is 0.91, NFI is 0.92, CFI is 0.89 and RSMEA is 0.92. We also evaluated the indirect effect model for the second mediation (routed from PC to EE, and EE to IIB). The indirect effect model with mediating variable i.e. EE demonstrated fit indices with values as follows: χ^2/df ratio is 2.46, GFI is 0.88, NFI is 0.90, CFI is 0.91 and RSMEA is 0.92 in both the models indicate that fit indices have improved over direct effect model, hence EE plays a significant role of mediator in the indirect model which contains the path of TW→ EE→IIB and PC→ EE→IIB. The said procedure is done according to the guidelines of Shrout and Bolger (2002) for testing mediation in SEM.

6. Conclusion and Implications

Organizations need fully engaged employees as this kind of behavior is key to building an effective organization (Doran & Ryan, 2017). Drawing upon LMX theory and prior theoretical and empirical knowledge, this study proposes a framework that indicates that TW and PC build IIB, and EE functions as a mediator in an indirect path to strengthen the relationship between these constructs. The findings produced by the current study are consistent with prior literature and enhance the significance of the model like Hu and Zheng (2021) and Imran et al. (2020). The positive relationship between PC and IIB indicates that when employees exhibit higher PC, they show more satisfaction with their work and their attitude and behavior become more positive. With this attitude, they will invest more time in their work performance and display creativity which ultimately shapes their behavior. Similarly, the positive association of TW with IIB also shows consistency with the study from Firoz and Chaudhary (2022). The reason could be enthusiasm which makes the employee energetic due to which they show IIB. Moreover, findings also highlight that TW becomes more promising and highly effective when individuals have weak ties with their emotional aspect. Consistent with the study such as Fang et al. (2019), it is quite alluring that thriving is a factor that has a substantial influence on innovation. Since there is a positive relationship between TW and IIB, a supportive atmosphere is essential to take advantage of individuals' vitality and convert it into innovative behavior.

The implications of the present study produce a variety of suggestions for the telecommunication firms which helps in improving EE attitude. Since the telecommunication sector is people-oriented, hence, the frequency of interaction between front-line employees, co-workers, and consumers is normally high. This indicates that the particular industry possesses social characteristics. Supervisors and managers in telecom firms are therefore advised to design fun activities to show support to employees and encourage social relationships in the workplace. This also helps them to dig out positive emotions which further build a positive association between an individual's PC and EE. Moreover, PCs appear to be an essential resource for

organizations. Once individuals start performing their duties, managers are advised to improve their PC in a supportive manner which can be done by motivating and encouraging them to trigger a higher level of EE.

The ability to innovate is a strategic element of all telecom organizations. The purpose of this research is to better understand the roots of innovation in the telecom business. This study adds to earlier research by increasing our understanding of the elements that influence employees' cognitive processes linked with IIB. That was previously linked with individual creativity (Slåtten et al., 2020). This study, by incorporating the notion of TW, provides insight into the connections between the core elements of TW and IIB Furthermore, unlike most past research on innovation at the organizational level; this study examines innovation from the perspective of individual employees. Employees who produce distinctive and useful ideas (cognitively) are willing and motivated to apply them at work if the other two components (TW and PC) are present. Previously these factors PC, EE, and TW from the perspective of innovation are studied mostly with SDT and COR theory and SET but we used LMX theory as a theoretical framework. This research also contributes to the literature on IIB as it shows the empirical evidence of the mediating effect of EE in the relationship of IIB, PC, and TW. Prior studies suggest that PC should be studied along with the mediating effect of EE.

Managers must recognize the importance of modifying their traditional workplace that retain employees' sense of belonging and provide them with particular treatment regarding work completion as well as maintaining their dedication and creative state of mind. The present study would help managers select people who are eager, active, and enthusiastic about their work, which is essential for a creative environment. The more an individual exhibits innovative behavior, the more the organization benefits from his ideas and thoughts. It will be beneficial in terms of staff selection, appropriate placement, and other developmental opportunities in the telecom sector. During recruitment, managers must prefer candidates with a history of high psychological capital, as it is one of the strategies for enhancing an environment of creativity and inventive behavior, present study reveals a perceived worth of employee PC at all levels in supporting imaginative and unique employee behavior. Firms are encouraged to improve their working atmosphere by developing challenging environments, instilling a competitive spirit among workers, and establishing continuous and consistent performance feedback systems, so that employees can learn about their productivity and poor performers can bounce back and prove themselves.

The findings of the research also indicate that EE improves IIB. It means to build innovative behavior; organizations first have to shift their focus toward employee personal and professional development. The arrangement of an attractive and comfortable environment and encouragement of social activities would mold the employees and a positive attitude would emerge that would further shape their thoughts. Although it is quite difficult to change the structure, however, employees and firms both can contribute by focusing on their personal and well-maintained resources. The findings also recommend that people who have higher PC can handle time pressure. It means firms should design training programs that would solely focus on employees' PCs.

7. Directions for Future Research

The present study indeed provides a meaningful contribution to existing literature; however, certain limitations make the study less generalizable like only primary data were included in the study, and usage of secondary data along with primary data would be more helpful to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed framework. The study only used EE as a mediator, the absence of certain other mediators and moderators in the framework also asserts limitation, and hence, scholars are recommended to add other mediators and moderators. Finally, a non-probability sampling technique was used to collect information from a sample. This technique may not provide accuracy in terms of outcomes, thereby, it is recommended to prioritize probability sampling to produce concrete affirmations.

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Appendix-1 Fact Sheet- Thriving at Work, Psychological Capital and Individual's Innovative Behaviour

Author and Year	Objectives	Geographical description	Data Collection	Variables	Findings
Yousaf et al., (2019)	The study empirically tested the mechanism through which employee voice behavior mediates the relationship between the dependent variable (employee psychological well-being at the workplace), and independent variables (thriving at work, ethical leadership).	South Asia's fiber optic telecommunication company	Used a questionnaire to collect data. By purposive sample technique.	DV Employee psychological well-being (IV) Ethical leadership Thriving at work (MeD) Employee voice behavior	The results of the study demonstrated that ethical leadership and thriving at work are associated positively with the psychological well-being of telecom industry employees. The employee voice behavior acted as a mediator between ethical leadership, thriving at work, and employee wellbeing.
Shahid & Muchiri, (2019)	The paper provided a major review of research on positivity, and proposed pathways for further theory-building relating to constructs that conceptually relate to positivity. The paper developed a conceptual framework that depicted the relationship between organizational virtuousness, authentic leader behaviors, psychological capital, job performance, and thriving.		20 key articles reviewed. Used computerized keywords in the business source databases.		The conceptual framework proposed direct relationships between psychological capital, authentic leadership, job performance, and organizational virtuousness. Moreover, authentic leadership is proposed to potentially nurture psychological capital, organizational virtuousness, job performance, and employee thriving.

					Additionally, the relationship between authentic leadership and the performance of employees is projected to be mediated by psychological capital, and organizational virtuousness. Lastly, psychological capital, the thriving of employees, and organizational virtuousness are designated as mediators of the relationship between authentic leadership, and job performance.
Slåtten et al., (2019)	The study has contributed to the domain of health services research by studying Innovative behavior from an employee perspective by addressing organizational characteristics (leadership autonomy), and personal characteristics (psychological capital, and employee creativity).	Norway's hospital.	Used a questionnaire to collect data. Two rounds involving managerial authority to share questionnaires through emails to employees in agreed-upon divisions.	(DV) Individual innovative behavior (IV) Individual creativity Psychological creativity Leadership autonomy support (MeD) Individual creativity Psychological Capital	The findings of the study indicate that individual innovative behavior is directly and positively associated with leadership autonomy support (β=0.07), individual creativity (β=0.44), and psychological capital (β=0.34). The relationship between leadership autonomy support and individual innovative behavior was also mediated by psychological capital. Employees' creativity mediates the relationships between psychological capital, leadership autonomy support, and individual innovative behavior.
Shahid et al., (2021)	The paper explored the consequences and antecedents of thriving at work, identified literature gaps after analysis of 23 published key articles, and proposed a framework, that encapsulated potential pathways for further research on thriving at work.		Analyzed 23 published key articles. Used thriving as the keyword in the databases, and search engines.		The findings of the study proposed a conceptual framework highlighting outcomes and antecedents of thriving at work. The literature review especially illustrated how contextual factors (organizational virtuousness, and transformational leadership) acted as antecedents of thriving at work. Then the study proposed a research direction where work is associated with psychological empowerment (innovative work

					behavior, and psychological capital).
Anjum et al., (2021)	The study hypothesized whether psychological capital can reverse the burnout of teachers at the workplace or what type of relation exists between psychological capital, and burnout of teachers at the workplace.	Punjab's primary school teachers.	Used a questionnaire to collect data. By probability sampling (systematic technique) from primary school teachers of 4 districts.	DV-Teacher's burnout symptoms IVs Psychological capital	The results of the study explained that the psychological capital of the participant is negatively associated with the burnout intensity (r = 0.537), and burnout frequency (r = 0.427).
Malik, (2022)	The research examined the mechanisms by which individual-focused transformational leadership (i.e. intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration) is associated with employees' taking charge by investigating the mediating roles of thriving at work, and psychological capital.	Indian Information Technology firms operating in the Delhi-NCR region.	Used online questionnaires to collect data from the employees of 24 IT firms.	(DV) Taking charge (IV) Individual-focused transformational leadership (MeD) Psychological capital Thriving at work	The results of the study showed that individual-focused transformational leadership is strongly associated with taking charge, thriving at work, and psychological capital. Process macro analysis findings indicated that individual-focused transformational leadership directly and indirectly impacted taking charge behavior via thriving at work, and psychological capital.
Tho, (2022)	The study examined that the relationship between the psychological capital of employee and their innovation outputs is mediated by job crafting, and the mechanism is moderated by the proactive personality of the employees.	Vietnam's employees	Used questionnaires and conducted interviews to collect data. From the Ho Chi Minh City industries employees.	(DV) Innovation outputs(IV) Psychological Capital (MoD) The proactive personality of the employee (MeD) Job crafting	The study findings from the structured equation modeling, and fuzzy-set qualitative comparative demonstrated that proactive personality, job crafting, and psychological capital do not serve as sufficient conditions for innovative outputs but findings confirmed the overarching roles of those personality-based resources, especially in combinations, of employees in their innovation outputs.
Yaqoob et al., (2023)	The research investigated burnout, and innovative work behavior practiced by Karachi's private high school teachers despite perceived organizational support, and in the absence or presence of thriving at the times of Covid December 2020.	Karachi's private high schools	Used a questionnaire to collect data. By convenience sampling from the teachers.	(DV) Burnout Innovative work behavior Thriving at work (IV) Perceived organizational support (MeD) Thriving at work	The results showed the existence of a negative relationship between perceived organization support, and burnout. Perceived organizational support impacts innovative work behavior positively. Thriving at work mediated the

					relationship between POS, IWB, and POS, BT.
Wang (2023)	The study has explored the impact on innovative behavior by innovative knowledge with a focus on the role of thriving at work as a mediator.	Mainland China's employees work full-time.	Used cross-sectional online survey to collect data.	(DV) Innovative behavior(IV) Innovative knowledge sharing (MeD) Thriving at work	The result of the study supports that thriving at work mediates significant, and positively related innovative knowledge sharing, and innovative behavior.

Appendix-2 Survey Questionnaire

What do you find yourself thriving at work within your organization, please circle the appropriate response according to the following scale.

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

TW1	1	I find myself learning often	1	2	3	4	5	
TW2	2	I continue to learn more as time goes by	1	2	3	4	5	
TW3	3	I see myself continually improving	1	2	3	4	5	
TW4	4	I am not learning	1	2	3	4	5	
TW5	5	I am developing a lot as a person	1	2	3	4	5	
TW6	6	I feel alive and vital	1	2	3	4	5	
TW7	7	I have energy and spirit	1	2	3	4	5	
Keep in view your innovative behavior yourself and circle the number that best represents your evaluation of innovativeness at the organization.								
IIB1	8	I create new ideas to solve problems in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	
IIB2	9	I search for new working methods or techniques to complete my work.	1	2	3	4	5	
IIB3	10	I investigate and find ways to implement my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	
IIB4	11	I promote my ideas so others might use them in their work.	1	2	3	4	5	
IIB5	12	I try out new ideas in my work.	1	2	3	4	5	
IIB	13	I approach work in a novel way	1	2	3	4	5	
Keeping in view your level of engagement within the organization and circle the number that best represents your evaluation								
EE1	14	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	1	2	3	4	5	
EE2	15	At my job, I feel strong and vigor	1	2	3	4	5	
EE3	16	I am enthusiastic about my job	1	2	3	4	5	
EE4	17	My job inspires me	1	2	3	4	5	
EE5	18	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	1	2	3	4	5	
Keeping in view your psychological capital i.e. hope, confidence level, flexibility, etc) circle the appropriate response.								
PC1	19	I am looking forward to the life ahead of me.	1	2	3	4	5	
PC2	20	Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad	1	2	3	4	5	
PC3	21	The future holds a lot of good in store for me.	1	2	3	4	5	
PC4	22	If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it.	1	2	3	4	5	
PC5	23	I can think of many ways to reach my current goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
PC6	24	Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful	1	2	3	4	5	
PC7	25	I am confident that I can deal efficiently with unexpected events.	1	2	3	4	5	