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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Balancing act: Exploring the interplay of production pressure and innovation/flexibility climates on employee well-being

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This study explored the separate and joint effects of innovation/flexibility and pressure to produce climates on employee exhaustion, and ultimately, turnover intentions. Survey data collected from 335 full-time employees across various sectors in Türkiye were analysed using a latent moderated structural equations approach. The findings revealed that, while innovation climates were inversely related to exhaustion and turnover intentions, production pressure climate had the opposite effect, which provided support for the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. Importantly, the study uncovered a significant interactive effect, indicating that the positive impact of production pressure on exhaustion was amplified under increased innovation demands. This finding provided support for the conservation of resources (COR) theory, suggesting that heavy and conflicting job demands depleted employees' psychological resources by impeding the deployment of defensive strategies. The findings contribute to innovation research by revealing that individual-level competing demands of balancing exploration and exploitation through contextual ambidexterity may pose challenges to employees' psychological well-being.

KEYWORDS
ambidexterity, conservation of resources, exhaustion, innovation/flexibility, job demands-resources, organizational climate, pressure to produce, turnover intentions

1 | INTRODUCTION

In today's business environment, innovation is not just advantageous—it's an absolute necessity for organizational survival and growth. Unlike traditional perspectives that confined the responsibility of fostering innovation to managerial or research and development realms, contemporary understanding emphasizes the active engagement of all employees in innovation initiatives (Anderson et al., 2014). Innovation requires adaptability, creativity and flexibility from employees, influencing their job experiences and overall well-being. Importantly, the well-being of employees also plays a pivotal role in shaping the organization's innovative capabilities. Resultantly, understanding the intricate relationship between fostering innovativeness and ensuring the well-being of employees stands out as a critical concern (Huhtala & Parzefall, 2007), yet there remains a surprising dearth of research exploring the effects of innovation demands on individuals' psychological and physical well-being.

At the heart of this understanding lies the individuals' perceptions of climate, which entails what the organization is like in terms of practices, policies, procedures, routines and rewards (Ostroff et al., 2012). Climate acts as a lens through which individuals perceive, interpret and respond to the demands and expectations regarding the standards of work, shaping their attitudes and influencing a multitude of outcomes including their psychological well-being (Schneider et al., 2013). Illustratively, in innovation management, this lens entails the extent to which the organizational context provides necessary resources and support for innovation (Scott & Bruce, 1994), thereby fostering employees' innovative behaviours and creativity (Gundry

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et al., 2016). Innovation is intimately linked with flexibility, which denotes the ability to adapt and respond to changing circumstances and challenges. Flexibility is a crucial component of the innovation process, as it provides the agility needed to implement novel ideas effectively (Randhawa et al., 2021). Indeed, due to the intertwined nature of these concepts they have been merged to reflect a unitary dimension of organizational climate (Patterson et al., 2005).

In the realm of strategy, organizational climate plays a crucial role for employees to navigate the dynamic interplay between two key aspects in the pursuit of innovation: exploration vs. exploitation. The inherent incompatibility between these two processes necessitates individuals to shift their focus cyclically between them to achieve the optimal balance, demonstrating an organization's contextual ambidexterity (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004). Hence, the perspective that has gained traction in innovation literature (e.g., Amankwah-Amoah & Adomako, 2021; Coradi et al., 2015; Havermans et al., 2015) recognizes that innovation and pressure to produce are not mutually exclusive but can (and should) coexist at the unit level. In this process, perceptions of climate (which pertain to formal and informal organizational structures such as HR systems, cultural values and social norms) set the stage by emitting signals to employees regarding overarching expectations regarding exploration vs. exploitation (Güttel & Konlechner, 2009). Consequently, individuals within the organization navigate the day-to-day challenges, deciding when to explore new opportunities and when to exploit existing capabilities, based on their perceptions of the prevailing work climate. Accordingly, in the current study, exploration and exploitation mechanisms are psychometrically captured and operationalized from employees' perspectives through *innovation/flexibility* and *pressure to produce* climates, respectively. In other words, these two types of climates indicate the extent to which employees perceive that their organizations emphasize and provide resources for innovation/flexibility (exploration) and production efficiency (exploitation).

Thus, the primary aim of this study is to examine the individual-level consequences of the conceptual trade-off between exploration and exploitation. On one hand, the demands linked to exploitation (in a high pressure to produce climate) involve executing tasks efficiently, meeting productivity standards and targets and adhering to established procedures (Hirst et al., 2018). On the other hand, the pursuit of exploration (in a high innovation/flexibility climate) necessitates a disparate set of goals, abilities and behaviours, characterized by an open-ended and experimental approach that entails "the exertion of energy and resources to an end that has no (or little) apparent consequence for how we currently define progress or performance" (Adner & Levinthal, 2008, p. 51). Therefore, in organizations that have high standards and expectations for both exploration and exploitation within their units, employees bear the responsibility of determining how to allocate their limited energy and psychological resources to meet these competing demands. These challenges inevitably impact their psychological well-being in the workplace.

Although the innovation literature has examined the impact of exploration vs. exploitation tradeoff on employees' innovative behaviours and performance (e.g., Hirst et al., 2018; Li et al., 2008; Stetler & Magnusson, 2015), the impact of this duality on individuals' psychological health and well-being has not yet received attention in research. Studies focus on the importance of the significance of environmental, organizational and individual-level changes in supporting ambidextrous capabilities and maintaining competitive advantage through strategies such as fostering an innovation culture, enhancing knowledge management and leveraging transformational leadership (Saleh et al., 2023). However, the limited research available on the intersection of employee well-being and innovation primarily considers well-being solely as an antecedent of innovative behaviour (e.g., Kim et al., 2021; Koroglu & Ozmen, 2022; Nasir et al., 2022). Brulé and Munier (2021) have criticized this approach, noting that "innovation is treated as a dependent variable without seeming to pay attention to the consequences that the innovations may have on the subjective well-being of teams and employees" (p.18). They called for more nuanced research that challenges the "innovation-as-always-positive bias" and explores the potential negative effects of innovation demands on individuals' subjective well-being.

Along these lines, the current study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on organizational innovation and ambidexterity by examining the complex interplay between innovation/flexibility and production pressure climates and their impact on employee well-being, particularly focusing on exhaustion and turnover intentions. It underscores the dual demands placed on employees in ambidextrous organizations and investigates how these demands affect their psychological health and propensity to remain with the organization. By exploring these dynamics, the study aims to highlight the critical need for organizations to comprehend the psychological balancing act employees regularly undertake and develop strategies and policies to combat these potential threats.

The study model (presented in Figure 1) relies on extant theories and research on employee well-being to explain the impact of these competing demands. Specifically, based on job demands-resources (JD-R) theory (Demerouti et al., 2001), it is hypothesized that high levels of pressure to produce climate will exacerbate exhaustion, whereas innovation/flexibility climate will generally reduce it, ultimately mediating these effects on turnover intentions. In addition to these main effects, based on the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2001), the model suggests that the positive effect of pressure to produce on exhaustion will be amplified by high levels of innovation/flexibility. In the upcoming sections, the variables of interest, the theoretical rationale and supporting findings from past literature are provided and explained in detail.

2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 | Organizational ambidexterity, climates and individual work demands

In organizational strategy, the concepts of exploration and exploitation play a crucial role in navigating the delicate balance between innovation and production focus (March, 1991). Exploration entails

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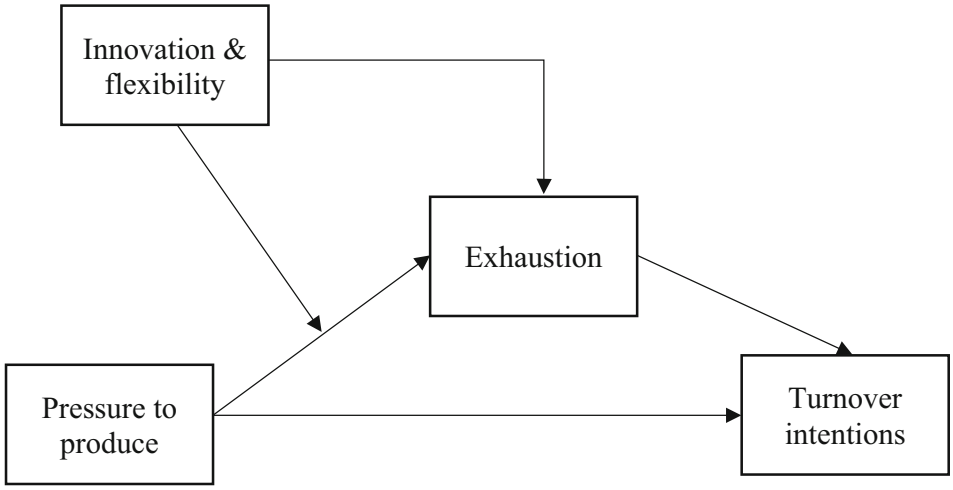


FIGURE 1 The hypothesized study model.

the pursuit of new knowledge, experimentation and risk-taking to discover novel opportunities, directly linking to innovation by fostering the creation of groundbreaking ideas, products or services (Adner & Levinthal, 2008). Exploitation, in contrast, involves refining existing competencies, technologies and paradigms, aligning with a production focus that emphasizes efficiency, optimal use of current knowledge and incremental improvements to existing processes.

Traditionally, scholars argued that firms must make a choice between exploitation and exploration as these two mechanisms are incompatible and competing with each other (March, 1991). However, literature has also emphasized the importance of balancing exploration and exploitation efforts, especially at the individual and group levels (e.g., Beger et al., 2023; Stetler & Magnusson, 2015), since an exclusive focus on either can be detrimental. Exclusive exploration leads to numerous undeveloped ideas and insufficient competence, while exclusive exploitation traps organizations in suboptimal equilibria (March, 1991). Notwithstanding, achieving this balance poses a challenge, with structural ambidexterity and temporal separation through cycling emerging as two prominent mechanisms (Lavie et al., 2010). Traditionally, ambidexterity involves differentiated yet weakly integrated subunits, preventing process management from stifling experimentation in exploratory units (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996). Temporal cycling through punctuated equilibrium entails long periods of exploitation and short bursts of exploration through sequential goal-focused attention (Gupta et al., 2006). Punctuated equilibrium is especially important for understanding exploration and exploitation within a single domain, where structural ambidexterity would not be feasible. To reconcile the tensions between exploration and exploitation within units, organizations can seek to enhance their contextual ambidexterity, which entails "building a set of processes or systems that enable and encourage individuals to make their own judgments about how to divide their time between conflicting demands for alignment and adaptability" (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004, p. 211). In this arrangement, individual managers and employees bear the majority of the control, responsibility and burden for sustaining the equilibrium.

The concepts of exploration and exploitation raise questions about the continuity (the seamless progression) or orthogonality (the mutual independence) between these pursuits (Gupta et al., 2006), which depends heavily on the level of analysis. At the organizational level, groups or units may balance exploration and exploitation through specialization, delegating responsibilities and assigning different routines. However, the challenge increases at the individual level due to substantial differences in goals, routines and learning focus necessitated by these two activities (Stetler & Magnusson, 2015). The ability to switch between these two modes may also be determined by factors such as the allocation of decision rights, change routines and the level of empowerment within a group or organization (Gilson et al., 2005). Individual managers and employees must navigate conflicting elements in their task environments and proactively adjust exploration–exploitation activities by engaging in external environmental monitoring (Boumgarden et al., 2012) through effective performance management and social support (Agostini et al., 2016).

Individual-level goal conflict, stemming from the tension between exploration (innovation and flexibility) and exploitation (pressure to produce) goals, impedes goal pursuit as progress towards one goal often comes at the expense of another (Austin & Vancouver, 1996). This conflict leads to inhibited goal progress, thereby reducing psychological well-being (Gray et al., 2017). Illustratively, Stetler and Magnusson (2015) demonstrated the importance of goal clarity for employees' effectiveness in coping with the conflicting goals of exploration and exploitation in R&D departments. Furthermore, beyond task and goal conflict, innovation and flexibility entail notable social challenges for individual employees. Attempting to engage in innovative behaviours may trigger interpersonal conflicts with coworkers and supervisors (Janssen et al., 2004). These threats can significantly increase work exhaustion, especially when individuals do not believe they are treated fairly (Janssen, 2004).

2.2 | JD-R and exhaustion

In the JD-R model, exhaustion refers to the negative outcomes arising from the health impairment process, wherein chronic job demands

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deplete employees' mental and physical energy and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This depletion of energy is likely to cause impaired health for employees as well as increased intentions to leave (Demerouti et al., 2001). JD-R model explains that exhaustion results from the perceived gap between the demands imposed by one's job and the available resources, encompassing both material and psychological support (Bakker et al., 2014). Furthermore, exhaustion detrimentally affects individual effectiveness within the organization through decreased work attitudes, well-being and increased intentions to quit (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

The JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding how perceived work characteristics shape employees' well-being. According to this model, work characteristics can be categorized into two primary domains: job demands and job resources. Job demands encompass a range of physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of work that necessitate sustained effort from employees and, if not effectively managed, can lead to exhaustion. Examples of these job demands include high workload, time pressure, role ambiguity and conflicting demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). When employees find themselves contending with an excessive load of job demands without commensurate resources to help them cope, the result is often heightened stress levels and exhaustion.

In contrast, job resources represent aspects of work that are instrumental in facilitating the achievement of work-related goals, mitigating the impact of job demands and enhancing overall well-being (Bakker et al., 2014). These resources can take various forms, including contextual factors such as social support, performance feedback and autonomy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources serve as essential assets in buffering the adverse effects of job demands and fostering a work environment conducive to employee well-being and performance.

3 | HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

3.1 | Pressure to produce climate

Pressure to produce—a climate dimension characterized by a high level of organizational demand to meet production targets and enhance profitability—poses a prominent job demand for employees (Probst, 2002). When employees perceive a strong and uncompromising emphasis on production, they experience heightened job demands that require sustained effort and time investment. The prolonged exposure to such high production pressure likely leads to the depletion of employees' physical and psychological resources, consequently increasing the vulnerability to exhaustion (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Various studies confirm that increased workload due to production pressure often culminates in energy depletion among employees (Carayon et al., 1999; Shirom et al., 2010), making them more susceptible to exhaustion. Moreover, production pressure can exacerbate exhaustion by triggering negative affective states, including anxiety and frustration (Podsakoff et al., 2007).

H1a. : Pressure to produce climate will be positively related to exhaustion.

The experience of exhaustion is in turn expected to increase employees' intentions to quit, as widely shown in the extant conceptual and empirical literature (e.g., Hur & Abner, 2024; Ozkan, 2022). This depletion of resources makes it increasingly difficult for individuals to meet the demands of their work environment, often leading to feelings of disengagement and a diminished sense of professional efficacy. Consequently, when employees are consistently exhausted, their desire to leave their current job situation intensifies as they seek to escape the unsustainable stress and find a more manageable work-life balance (Podsakoff et al., 2007).

Hence, we hypothesize the following:

H1b. : The positive relationship between the pressure to produce climate and turnover intentions will be mediated by exhaustion.

3.2 | Innovation/flexibility climate

In organizational climate literature, innovation indicates the extent of encouragement and support that is provided by the organization for new ideas and innovative approaches and a tendency to favour change (King & Anderson, 1995). An organization with a robust innovation climate not only encourages creativity but also actively supports the generation and implementation of novel concepts, thereby fostering a culture of innovation (Shin & Zhou, 2007). Concurrently, the flexibility component urges the organization and its employees to have high levels of adaptability to changing circumstances and promotes continuous learning, skill development and proactive responses to emerging opportunities or threats.

Extant literature indicates that high levels of organizational support (i.e., social, technical and financial assistance) provided in highly innovative climates serve as critical socioemotional resources for employees to cope with work demands in ambidextrous workplaces (Dediu et al., 2018). These climates encourage employees' creative problem-solving and innovative behaviours by providing them with high levels of autonomy (Sonmez & Yildirim, 2018), which promotes risk-taking, experimentation and thinking beyond conventional boundaries (Anderson et al., 2014). This autonomy not only fosters intrinsic motivation and work engagement but also helps employees manage job demands by allowing them to make choices that align with their preferences and work styles (Bakker et al., 2014).

Moreover, a high innovation climate enhances employees' psychological well-being by increasing perceptions of organizational support (POS) (Demircioglu, 2023), which is key to mitigating the exhaustive effects of job demands (March & Vandenberghe, 2016). It promotes psychological ownership of work (You et al., 2022), boosts intrinsic motivation (Lin & Liu, 2012) and enhances psychological empowerment (Lv et al., 2021), job satisfaction and commitment (Demircioglu, 2023). These benefits ultimately increase employee

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resilience (Plimmer et al., 2022) and reduce turnover intentions (Demircioglu & Berman, 2019).

Empirical research in the JD-R literature also consistently underscores the stress-buffering effects of working in an innovative environment. For example, Elovainio et al. (2002) illustrated that a high level of climate support for innovation reduces employees' occupational exhaustion by bolstering perceptions of procedural justice. Hakanen et al. (2006) delved into the role of an innovative work climate as a type of organization-level job resource for teachers, finding that it was linked to heightened overall employee well-being and reduced experiences of exhaustion. Similarly, King et al. (2007) demonstrated that a high level of innovation climate could enable employees to better cope with job demands, thereby enhancing organizational performance in the healthcare industry. Honkaniemi et al.'s (2015) qualitative analysis of public service organizations provided support for Huhtala & Parzefall (2007) model, indicating that innovativeness and well-being reciprocally strengthen one another in a virtuous cycle. Lastly, Elsamani et al.'s (2023) meta-analysis showed that organizational support for innovation is generally positively linked to employee well-being. In line with these findings, we hypothesize the following:

H2a. : Innovation/flexibility climate will be negatively related to exhaustion.

H2b. : The negative relationship between the innovation/flexibility climate and turnover intentions will be mediated by exhaustion.

3.3 | Interactive effects of climate dimensions

As previously described, the JD-R model suggests that the innovation/flexibility climate, by itself, acts as a job resource that buffers employees from experiencing exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2001). Nevertheless, existing research also indicates that innovation can function as a demand, exacerbating exhaustion. This is because it necessitates loading employees with additional tasks that involve complex problem-solving, thereby augmenting the overall workload both quantitatively and qualitatively beyond the regular scope (Huhtala & Diehl, 2007). Illustratively, in a contextually ambidextrous workplace, a high innovation/flexibility climate coexists with high pressure to produce climate, wherein a complex and challenging dynamic entails employees to face dual demands: they are expected to be creative and innovative, while simultaneously meeting strict deadlines and productivity targets. This duality can lead to a perception of resource scarcity, primarily psychological resources like energy, motivation and time.

The current study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of innovation beyond simply identifying it as a demand or a resource. Extant literature on the JD-R model indicates that employees' perceptions are context-dependent and shaped by their subjective interpretations, recognizing that employees are exposed to multiple job characteristics simultaneously (Li et al., 2023). Strong organizational climates provide both tangible and intangible resources for valued behaviours while also imposing various demands (e.g., performance, efficiency, adaptation, innovation, change) to align employees' behaviours with overall organizational objectives (Ashkanasy et al., 2000).

For example, in organizations with a high innovation/flexibility climate, engaging in complex and demanding innovative behaviours are not only welcomed and encouraged but also expected, as dictated by shared norms and values set standards (Huhtala & Diehl, 2007). Hence, whether individuals perceive innovation/flexibility as a resource or demand (or both) depends on this climate's salience within the larger group of climate variables. Innovation—by itself or when coupled with moderate levels of pressure to produce—is likely to be perceived as a resource that enhances psychological well-being. However, when innovation/flexibility demands are paired with high levels of production pressure, employees' subjective interpretations of innovation tasks can shift significantly, highlighting their potential demand characteristics. Thus, an elevated focus on innovation/flexibility can function as both a resource and a demand, depending on the broader context and the multiplicity of factors influencing employees' perceptions.

In explaining how individuals respond to the duality of pressures to produce and innovation demands, the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2001) can offer valuable insights. According to COR theory, individuals are motivated to acquire, preserve and protect their resources, as the possession of resources is essential for maintaining and enhancing their well-being (Hobfoll et al., 2018). One of the main tenets of this theory is that resource loss is a more potent stressor than the gain of resources, and individuals strive to prevent resource loss.

The fourth corollary of COR theory explains that individuals who perceive that their resources are scarce or at risk may instinctively adopt defensive postures to safeguard what remains (Hobfoll, 2001). That is, when employees experience both high innovation and high pressure to produce climates they are likely to perceive their psychological resources as being stretched to the limit. To conserve these precious resources, they may want to adopt a defensive stance, such as prioritizing efficiency over exploration, choosing to focus on immediate goals rather than innovative, time-consuming projects or avoiding taking risks due to the overwhelming pressure to produce. However, the presence of high expectations and social norms regarding the innovation climate can create tension between individuals' adoption of defensive strategies and the pressure to engage in creative endeavours. This tension can intensify exhaustion as individuals find themselves caught between their personal resource conservation needs and the external demands of their innovative work environment.

In brief, when a high innovation climate coexists with a high-pressure production environment, it is likely to intensify the depletion of employees' psychological resources and lead to a more pronounced increase in exhaustion and, as a result, a higher likelihood of turnover intentions.

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TABLE 1 Survey items, confirmatory factor analysis results and reliability statistics.

Item	Factor loading	α	CR	AVE
Factor 1: Pressure to produce		.84	.83	.50
People are expected to do too much in a day.	.69			
In general, peoples' workloads are not particularly demanding. (R)	.57			
Management require people to work extremely hard.	.83			
People here are under pressure to meet targets.	.77			
The pace of work here is pretty relaxed. (R)	.64			
Factor 2: Innovation & Flexibility		.	.92	.65
New ideas are readily accepted here	.84			
This company is quick to respond when changes need to be made.	.84			
Management here is quick to spot the need to do things differently.	.79			
This organization is very flexible; it can quickly change procedures to meet new conditions and solve problems as they arise.	.75			
Assistance in developing new ideas is readily available.	.84			
People in this organization are always searching for new ways of looking at problems.	.76			
Factor 3: Exhaustion		.78	.79	.44
After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better.	.56			
After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities. (R)	.77			
I can tolerate the pressure of my work very well. (R)	.70			
After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary.	.66			
Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well. (R)	.59			
Factor 4: Turnover intentions		.82	.	.62
I often think of leaving the organization.	.86			
It is very possible that I will look for a new job next year.	.83			
If I may choose again, I will choose to work for the current organization. (R)	.66			

Note. $N = 335$. Standardized factor loadings are reported. Reverse-scored items are denoted with an (R). α = alpha reliability. CR = composite reliability. AVE = average variance explained. All factor loadings are statistically significant at $p < .01$.

H3a. : Innovation/flexibility climate will moderate the direct relationship between pressure to produce climate and exhaustion. Specifically, the positive relationships will be stronger when the innovation/flexibility climate is high vs. low.

Taken together, these mechanisms suggest a first-stage moderated mediation, which means that the strength of the mediation effect (the pathway through which pressure to produce leads to turnover intentions via exhaustion) will depend on the level of the innovation/flexibility climate. Specifically:

H3b. : The indirect effect of pressure to produce climate on turnover intentions will be moderated by innovation/flexibility climate. Specifically, the positive relationships will be stronger when the innovation/flexibility climate is high vs. low.

4 | METHOD

4.1 | Study sample

Email survey invitations were sent to approximately 1,000 potential respondents, all of whom were registered in a professional survey company's database due to their prior expressed interest in participating in academic studies. The study sample consists of 335 full-time employees working in both white-collar and blue-collar roles at private firms. Accordingly, the sample captures a diverse reflection of industry sectors including, with the highest frequencies in service (25.4%), education (21.5%) and manufacturing (20%). Participants resided in 55 different municipalities in Türkiye, with the highest percentage in Istanbul (21.5%), followed by Izmir (7.1%) and Ankara (5.1%). Two hundred and four participants (60.9%) were female. The mean age was 35.5, ranging from 18 to 61. Education level was generally high; 65.4% had a university or higher degree; 28.4% were high school and 6.3% were primary school graduates. In

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terms of organizational tenure, 72.2% had reported working in their current company for more than one year.

4.2 | Measures

All the instruments were obtained from previous studies due to their established validity and acceptance in the literature. The survey instruments underwent translation from English to Turkish through a collaborative and iterative process involving two bilingual subject matter experts, following the technique proposed by Douglas and Craig (2007). The survey asked participants to express the degree of agreement with the provided statements using a five-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree"; 5 = "strongly agree"). All survey items and their reliability statistics are provided in Table 1.

4.2.1 | Organizational climate

Pressure to produce climate consisted of five items and innovation/flexibility climate was measured using six items from Patterson et al.'s (2005) Organizational Climate Measure (OCM). This tool was used in the current study to measure climate dimensions as it was designed and validated for predicting productivity and innovation.

4.2.2 | Employee exhaustion

Employees' experienced exhaustion was measured using five exhaustion items from the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti et al., 2003).

4.2.3 | Turnover intentions

The three-item scale from Chen et al. (1998) was used.

4.2.4 | Control variables

Participants' demographic characteristics including sex, age, education and blue-vs.-white collar status variables were used as controls to account for their potential influence on exhaustion.

5 | RESULTS

5.1 | Confirmatory factor analysis

Using the Mplus statistical software package, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to analyse the validity of the hypothesized factor structure, using the robust maximum likelihood (MLR) method of estimation and full information maximum likelihood (FIML) method to handle missing data. A comprehensive measurement model was formed with all three study variables defined as latent constructs. The method effects due to negatively worded items were taken into account by adding covariances between these items (Horan et al., 2003). According to conventionally accepted cutoff criteria, a model is considered to have an acceptable level of model fit if CFI is at or above .90, RMSEA is at or below .06 and SRMR is at or below .10 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Accordingly, the current model had a high level of fit to the data at hand, as indicated by model fit indices ($\chi^2_{[140]} = 375.42$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .09). Individual item loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) values are listed in Table 1. All loadings are statistically significant, ranging between .56 and .86. The alpha reliabilities for the subscales were equal to or above the .70 criterion. The composite reliability of all three measures ranges from .79 to .92, which meets the acceptable level of .60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All AVE values meet or exceed the .50 threshold for convergent validity, with the exception of exhaustion falling slightly below (i.e., .44). However, given the high composite reliability demonstrated by this measure at 0.79, it is considered acceptable in accordance with Fornell and Larcker's (1981) recommendation. In addition, Table 3 shows that correlations among constructs are all below the square root of the AVE values, providing additional statistical evidence for discriminant validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

5.2 | Analysis of common method variance (CMV)

In light of the cross-sectional design and the utilization of single-source data in the present study, an evaluation of the potential influence of common method variance (CMV) on the studied relationships was conducted using the marker variable CFA technique, which is shown to be robust disentangling method effects from true constructs (Williams & O'Boyle, 2015). In this analysis, a measure of expressive social ties was used as a nonideal marker variable (i.e., a variable that is correlated with substantive latent variables in the model). This variable measured employees' social network at work (Chen et al., 2020),

TABLE 2 Model comparison tests for common method variance.

Model	χ2	Df	CFI
1. CFA	512.67	214	.93
2. Baseline	1688.69	223	.67
3. Method-C	1688.16	225	.67
4. Method-U	1540.52	207	.70
5. Method-R	1544.52	213	.70
Chi-Square model comparison tests			
Δ models	Δχ2	Δdf	
1. Baseline vs. method-C	.53	1	
2. Method-C vs. method-U	147.64*	18	
3. Method-U vs. method-R	4.00	6	

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had a five-point Likert response scale (ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"), and included the sample item: "I am well acquainted personally with my coworkers."

Following the technique proposed by Williams et al. (2010), the first step involved the composition of a CFA model that included all study variables, along with the marker variable (results presented in Table 2). Building on this model, a Baseline Model was formed in which substantive factors were allowed to correlate with each other, while the marker was maintained as orthogonal, with its factor loadings and error variances fixed at the estimates obtained from the CFA Model. Subsequently, a Method-C Model was constructed by modifying the Baseline model in such a way that new factor loadings from the marker to each of the model indicators were added and forced to be equal. Then, a Method-U Model was created by removing the equivalence restrictions. In the final model, Method-R, the correlations among substantive factors were constrained to the values obtained in the Baseline Model. A series of $\chi 2$ difference tests revealed that the Method-U model was found to have a significantly better fit to the data compared to the Baseline and Method-C models, suggesting the presence of CMV effects in the data and the unequal impact of the marker on substantive variables. Finally, when the Method-R model was compared against the Method-U model, the statistical significance was not observed, indicating that the correlations among the substantive variables were not significantly influenced by the marker variable method effects. Thus, it can be concluded that, while CMV was found to exist in the data, its influence is not substantial enough to significantly impact the linear relationships between study variables.

5.3 | Descriptives, intercorrelations and alpha reliabilities

The descriptive statistics and zero-order Pearson correlations between the final study variables are presented in Table 3. The correlations between variables were in the directions as expected from the theory.

5.4 | Hypotheses testing

The study hypotheses were tested with the latent moderated structural equations (LMS) modelling approach due to its advantages of higher accuracy of estimates, smaller standard errors and higher power (Cheung et al., 2021). Analyses were conducted using Mplus software with TYPE = RANDOM, ESTIMATOR = MLR and ALGORITHM = INTEGRATION specifications. The results are presented in Table 4. Model 1 results show the (non-random) main effects of independent variables (climates of innovation/flexibility and pressure to produce) and controls. Model 2 includes the main effects as well as the interaction term between the two types of climates without controls. Model 3 includes all the main and interactive effects as well as the controls.

Hypothesis 1 posited that pressure to produce climate will be positively associated with exhaustion (H1a), which in turn will mediate the relationship between this climate and increased turnover intentions (H1b). As seen in Model 3 of Table 4, pressure to produce had a positive relationship ($\beta = .66$, $p < .01$), and innovation/flexibility climate had a negative relationship ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .01$) with exhaustion. The path from exhaustion to turnover intentions was also positive ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$). Inclusion of demographic control variables in Model 3 did not produce any meaningful changes to these hypothesized effects. The total indirect effect from pressure to produce to turnover intentions via exhaustion was statistically significant ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$). Hence, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported.

Hypothesis 2 suggested that an innovation/flexibility climate will be negatively associated with exhaustion (H2a), which in turn will mediate the relationship between this climate and increased turnover intentions (H2b). As seen in Model 3 of Table 4, innovation/flexibility climate had a negative relationship ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .01$) with exhaustion. The path from exhaustion to turnover intentions was positive ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$). The total indirect effect from innovation/flexibility climate to turnover intentions via exhaustion was statistically significant ($\beta = -.07$, $p < .05$). Hence, Hypotheses 2a and 2b were also supported.

TABLE 3 Descriptive statistics, reliabilities and correlation matrix.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Innovation/flexibility	3.61	1.03	(.81)						
2. Pressure to produce	3.24	1.06	−.48**	(.71)					
3. Exhaustion	3.00	.92	−.51**	.66	(.66)				
4. Turnover intentions	2.64	1.30	−.48**	.54**	.56**	(.79)			
5. Female			.01	.06	.10	.00	–		
6. Age	35.4	9.57	.03	−.09	−.15**	−.17**	−.14*	–	
7. Blue collar			−.17**	.07	.10	−.03**	.10	.06	
8. Education	2.69	.74	.00	.06	.06	.01	.11*	.24**	.37**

Note: $N = 335$. Diagonal elements (in parentheses) are square roots of the AVE values.
*$p \leq .05$.
**$p \leq .01$.

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TABLE 4 Result of the latent moderated structural equations modelling.

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	*SE*	*β*	*SE*	*β*	*SE*
Pressure to produce (PP) → exhaustion	.69**	.05	.66**	.06	.66**	.06
Innovation/flexibility (IN) → exhaustion	−.18**	.06	−.21**	.06	−.21**	.06
PP × IN → exhaustion			.13**	.04	.14**	.04
PP → turnover	.23*	.10	.23*	.12	.24*	.12
IN → turnover	−.20**	.06	−.18**	.07	−.20**	.06
Burnout → turnover	.39**	.11	.39**	.12	.38**	.12
Controls						
Female → exhaustion	.05	.05			.05	.05
Age → exhaustion	−.09*	.05			−.08	.05
Blue collar → exhaustion	.10	.05			.11*	.05
Education → exhaustion	.02	.05			.05	.05
Female → turnover	−.10*	.05			−.10*	.05
Age → turnover	−.11*	.05			−.11*	.05
Blue collar → turnover	−.13*	.05			−.13*	.05
Education → turnover	−.10	.05			−.10	.05
R-square - exhaustion	.63		.64		.64	
R-square - turnover	.52		.50		.52	

Note: $N = 335$. Model 1: Main and control effects only. Model 2: Main interactive effects only. Model 3: Main, interactive, and control effects. Fit statistics for Model1: ($\chi^2_{[1193]} = 467.76$, $p \leq .01$; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .09). Standardized coefficients are reported.
*$p \leq .05$.
**$p \leq .01$.

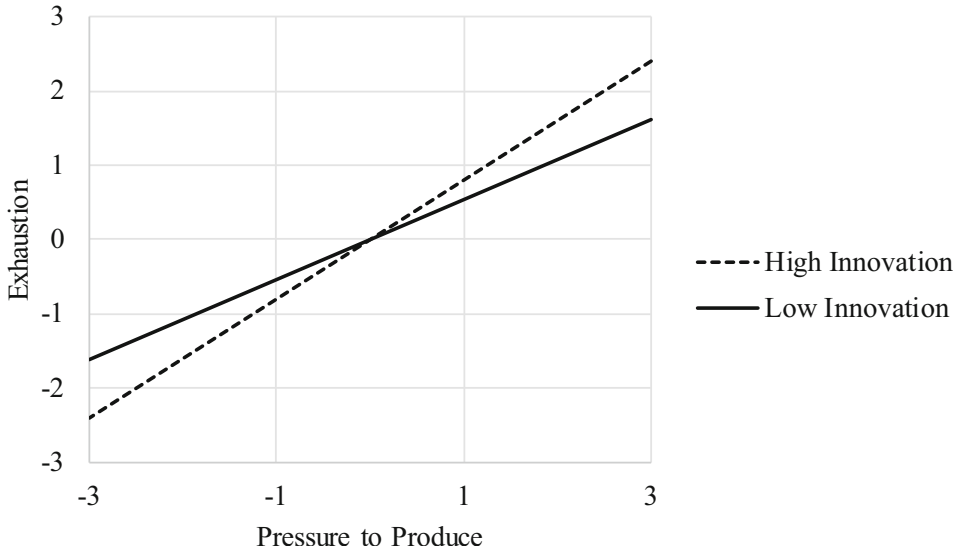


FIGURE 2 Simple slopes plot of the interactive effect of pressure to produce and innovation/flexibility climates on exhaustion.

Hypothesis 3 suggested that the innovation/flexibility climate will moderate the direct impact of the pressure to produce climate on exhaustion (H3a) as well as the indirect effect on turnover intentions (H3b). Model 2 results included a statistically significant coefficient for the interaction term ($\beta = .13$, $p < .01$). Model 3 results indicated that controlling for the effects of demographic factors did not change the effect of the interaction term. The interaction was plotted in Figure 2, with values at one SD above and below the mean for innovation/flexibility. The nature of the interaction was in line with Hypothesis 3a, such that the positive relationship between pressure to produce and exhaustion was stronger when innovation/flexibility was high. The tests of simple effects indicate that slopes for both high and

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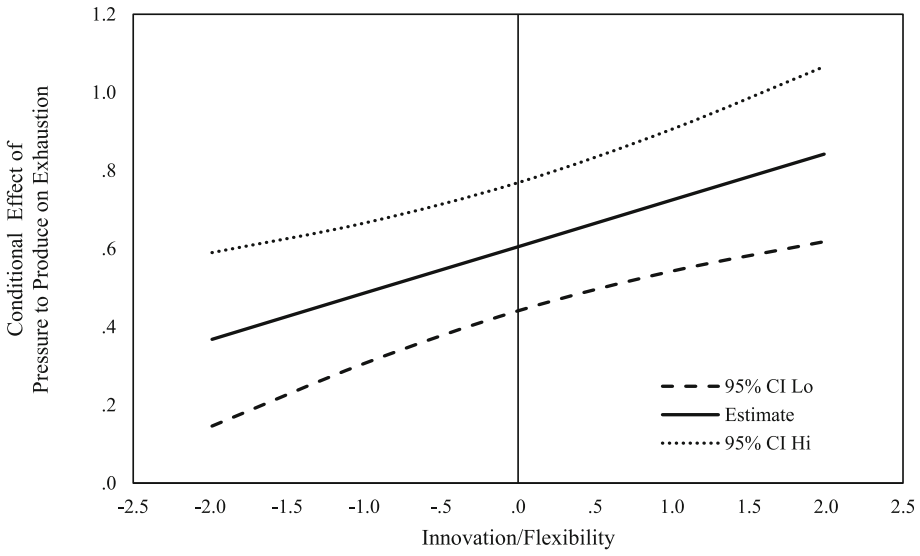


FIGURE 3 The Johnson-Neyman plot of the interaction effect. *Note:* the solid line shows the conditional slopes of the relationship between pressure to produce and exhaustion across the range of innovation/flexibility; dashed lines indicate 95% confidence intervals. Both dashed lines are above the x-axis across the entire range, hence the effects are all statistically significant.

low values of innovation/flexibility were statistically significant ($\beta_{low} = .48$, $\beta_{high} = .73$, $p < .01$). The index of moderated mediation was also statistically significant ($\beta = .08$, $p < .05$).

The interaction was also plotted using the Johnson-Neyman technique, as shown in Figure 3, which showed a statistically significant positive effect of pressure to produce on exhaustion across the entire range of innovation/flexibility climate, and the conditional effect was strengthened as innovation/flexibility increased. Hence, Hypothesis 3a was supported.

The positive indirect effect of pressure to produce on turnover intentions via exhaustion was also moderated by innovation/flexibility climate, as indicated by a statistically significant index of moderated mediation ($\beta = .07$, $p < .05$). The indirect effect was stronger when innovation was high vs low ($\beta_{low} = .30$, $\beta_{high} = .44$, $p < .01$). Hence, Hypothesis 3b was supported.

6 | DISCUSSION

6.1 | Theoretical contributions

By integrating the JD-R model to explain contextually ambidextrous work settings, the current study sheds light on how individuals navigate and respond to heightened expectations of innovation and productivity, delineating their subsequent psychological well-being and shaping their overall work attitudes. The findings confirm the adverse relationship between a production pressure climate and exhaustion, echoing prior research (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). An intense demand for high productivity was linked to the depletion of employees' psychological resources, escalating the risk of exhaustion and intentions to quit. Furthermore, the results were in line with existing research demonstrating a negative association between innovation/flexibility climates and exhaustion (De Jonge & Schaufeli, 1998; Hakanen et al., 2006). This highlights the pivotal role employees' innovation and flexibility climate perceptions play by acting as valuable defences against exhaustion and maximizing the retention of human capital.

This study makes several significant theoretical contributions to literature. First, it enriches innovation literature by investigating the consequences of the exploration-exploitation trade-off on individual psychological well-being—an aspect that has been underexplored in prior research. Grounded in the concept of contextual ambidexterity, the study acknowledges the pivotal role of individual managers and employees as primary decision-makers tasked with allocating resources in the pursuit of both innovation and productivity goals. This emphasis on the micro-level decision-making processes adds granularity to our understanding of how employees, as agents of innovation, grapple with the dual demands of exploration and exploitation. It contends that the impact of these conflicting demands on employees is intricately linked to their perceptions of diverse dimensions within the organizational climate. Notably, the study posits that contextual ambidexterity manifests when organizational expectations simultaneously have high demands of exploration (characterized by innovation and flexibility) and exploitation (represented by pressure to produce). This comprehensive approach provides a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics between organizational climate dimensions, individual responses, and the consequential effects on well-being within the context of contextual ambidexterity.

Second, the current study contributes significantly to research on organizational climate by going beyond the traditional approach of examining individual climate dimensions in isolation and uncovering the nuanced interplay between multiple climates (i.e., pressure to produce and innovation/flexibility), addressing the gap identified in existing literature (MacCormick & Parker, 2010; Schneider et al., 2013). The results showed that, when studied in isolation, an innovation/flexibility climate independently lowered exhaustion, while pressure to produce climate increased it. However, the joint effects of these two climates demonstrated a unique pattern, wherein a high innovation/flexibility climate contributed to an amplified positive slope of pressure to produce on exhaustion. This phenomenon suggests that

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the positive impact of innovation/flexibility on reducing exhaustion is overshadowed when coupled with the pressures to produce. When seen from the perspective of COR theory, the findings suggest that employees facing resource scarcity tend to adopt defensive strategies to protect their remaining resources (Hobfoll, 2001). However, their capacity to use such strategies is significantly impeded when the work environment simultaneously imposes conflicting goals. For instance, individuals overwhelmed by excessive workload may attempt to prioritize short-term goals to cope with heightened production pressures. Yet, when management also sets high expectations for innovation and flexibility, their latitude for deploying these defensive behavioural strategies diminishes. This constraint arising from innovation/flexibility demands is likely to exacerbate rather than ameliorate exhaustion, thereby leading to the loss of key talent.

The current study indicates the importance of developing more comprehensive multiple climate models and perspectives in organizational research (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). As the current results indicate, seemingly positive organizational climates, when combined under specific conditions, may lead to unintended negative consequences for employee outcomes. Hence, researchers must note that organizational climates do not exist in isolation but can have potentially amplifying or mitigating effects on one another. By expanding research to incorporate multiple climates and their interactive effects, scholars can gain deeper insights into the complex dynamics within organizations and provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that shape employee outcomes.

6.2 | Limitations and future research

This study provides valuable insights but also encounters several limitations that warrant acknowledgement. Primarily, the reliance on cross-sectional self-report data at the individual level introduces the possibility of common method bias. Although robust methods were employed to mitigate this bias, future research would benefit from employing longitudinal designs and analysing group-level effects using nested datasets to better understand the temporal dynamics and collective aspects of organizational climates.

The findings also highlight the significant implications of exploration-exploitation tradeoffs on employee well-being, opening avenues for further investigation. Future studies should consider examining how individual antecedents such as demographic factors, personal values or goal preferences influence responses to these tradeoffs. Such research could deepen our understanding of individual differences in coping with organizational demands.

Moreover, the study's focus was limited to specific dimensions of organizational climate— innovation/flexibility and production pressure. While these dimensions are crucial, the interactions between other climate dimensions should be explored, especially by focusing on those that pose competing demands in an innovative environment (e.g., autonomy vs formalization, reflexivity vs. tradition). Future research can explore these additional dimensions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how organizations should balance and deploy their strategic priorities and practices to ensure positive employee attitudes and well-being.

In addition, exploring the effects and boundary conditions of managerial strategies for navigating these tensions remains an area ripe for research. Studies could examine how different leadership styles, such as servant or empowering leadership, affect the organization's ability to reduce tensions and support employees. Assessing the impact of performance management practices, including goal clarity, regular feedback and aligned metrics, could further elucidate how these practices help integrate innovation and productivity pursuits effectively.

6.3 | Practical implications

These findings have important implications for organizations, managers and employees who are trying to achieve innovation without sacrificing operational effectiveness and productivity. First, organizations should be wary of the potential negative consequences of excessive production pressure on their employees, especially when such demands are coupled with amplified expectations of innovation/flexibility. When the demands of innovation/flexibility are managed well, it serves as a resource that contributes positively to employee engagement, satisfaction and well-being. However, if the challenges and uncertainties associated with innovation become overwhelming, they may lead to exhaustion and eventual loss of critical human capital.

Admittedly, striking this balance is elusive and inherently subjective, reflecting the complex interplay between individual differences and dynamic workplace demands. Accordingly, organizations and managers must actively monitor and adjust their work climates to effectively support the diverse needs of their employees, recognizing that perceptions of what constitutes a supportive environment vary significantly among individuals. Moreover, the balance is dynamic and context-specific, varying not only from one individual to another but also across different tasks and over time. Organizations, therefore, must cultivate a flexible and responsive approach to management that acknowledges the fluid nature of employee needs and workplace dynamics. This includes creating systems that allow for the adjustment of job demands and resources in real-time, providing support that is tailored to individual differences and fostering an open culture where employees feel comfortable discussing their needs and feedback without fear of reprisal. By establishing mechanisms such as periodic surveys and focus groups, organizations can gather essential feedback to understand how their climate impacts well-being and identify necessary adjustments. Tailoring support strategies to specific needs—such as balancing innovation/flexibility demands with adequate mental health resources or flexible work arrangements—ensures a healthier, more productive workforce. This proactive approach not only enhances employee satisfaction but also contributes to sustained organizational performance.

The findings can also be interpreted by underscoring the significance of establishing clarity and consistency in organizational

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strategies to create a cohesive and effective work environment (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). When leaders face the challenge of wanting everything simultaneously and pushing for the simultaneous achievement of goals that may inherently involve resource allocation tradeoffs, the potential for goal ambiguity and conflict arises. This can leave employees grappling with inconsistent signals about where to direct their efforts and resources, which can exacerbate the risk of exhaustion and other psychological impediments as well as hinder their ability to perform and innovate.

The challenge of leaders simultaneously pursuing diverse goals with inherent tradeoffs necessitates strategic clarity and effective communication within organizations. To address this, leaders should prioritize and transparently communicate organizational goals, acknowledging potential tradeoffs and devising plans to help employees address them. Granting more autonomy, encouraging flexibility and adaptability by involving employees in the goal-setting process, and providing ample resource support, regular monitoring and developmental feedback can alleviate the pressure on employees facing conflicting demands. These interventions can help reduce the impact of goal conflict and ambiguity, foster a shared understanding and enhance overall organizational effectiveness while prioritizing employee well-being.

Organizations can effectively achieve and sustain contextual ambidexterity by adopting a synergistic approach that integrates capability-enhancing and supportive practices. This combination ensures that employees are equipped with the necessary skills and resources to navigate the exploration-exploitation trade-off while concurrently fostering a work environment that prioritizes well-being and promotes employee retention. Capability-enhancing practices may include targeted training programs (e.g., stress management, time prioritization and adaptive strategies for handling competing goals), leadership development initiatives and structured innovation processes, providing employees with the tools to excel in both exploratory and exploitative tasks. Simultaneously, supportive practices, such as open communication channels, flexible work arrangements and a culture that values work-life balance, contribute to a positive and sustainable organizational climate. This integrated approach aligns strategic goals with the needs of employees, creating a harmonious work environment conducive to both innovation and productivity.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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