

Igniting the Light of Hope: How Disability-Inclusive HR Practices Enhance the Job Well-Being of Employees with Disabilities

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Abstract

Employees with disabilities (EWDs) often encounter workplace barriers that hinder their access to organizational resources. Understanding how to foster their workplace well-being is crucial for creating truly inclusive environments. Drawing on conservation of resources theory, this study proposes a moderated mediation model in which thriving at work mediates the relationship between DIHRPs and job well-being of EWDs, and perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between DIHRPs and thriving at work and further strengthens the indirect effect of DIHRPs on job well-being through thriving at work. Data were collected from 267 participants using a two-wave matched survey design. The results show that DIHRPs positively affect the job well-being of EWDs through thriving at work. Perceived organizational support positively moderates the relationship between DIHRPs and thriving at work and further strengthens the indirect effect of DIHRPs on job well-being through thriving at work.

1 Introduction

Employment is widely recognized as a fundamental pathway to social inclusion and economic independence for people with disabilities (Chumo et al., 2023). In recent years, the Chinese government and various organizations have made substantial efforts to improve employment opportunities for this population (Qi et al., 2020; Jing et al., 2022). Nevertheless, obtaining a job does not necessarily guarantee positive workplace experiences (Ginis et al., 2023; Ginis et al., 2024). Beyond access to employment, scholars have paid increasing attention to job quality and well-being for employees with disabilities (EWDs) after entering the workplace (Alfalih & Ragmoun, 2025; Ragmoun & Alfalih, 2025). Due to persistent stereotypes, workplace discrimination, and environmental barriers, EWDs often encounter difficulties in their daily work experiences, which may undermine their job well-being (Shantz et al., 2018; Chan et al., 2025). Given that job well-being is closely associated with employees' motivation, performance, and long-term career development (Liu et al., 2024), understanding how to enhance the well-being of EWDs has become an important issue for both scholars and practitioners. Consequently, identifying organizational practices that foster positive work experiences and promote job well-being among EWDs represents a critical research priority.

Numerous studies have shown that human resource management practices can enhance employees' well-being (Liu et al., 2025; Diep & Horváthová, 2026; Garavan et al., 2026). However, due to unique capabilities and needs of EWDs, traditional human resource management practices often fail to be fully effective (Sánchez-Marín et al., 2024). Human resource practices emphasizing both diversity and inclusion have demonstrated significant potential for enhancing employee capabilities, stimulating work motivation, and expanding development opportunities, particularly in environments with a highly diverse workforce (Zhao et al., 2025). As a result, disability-inclusive human resource practices (DIHRPs) have garnered widespread attention from scholars, offering a comprehensive path for promoting inclusivity in the workplace for EWDs (Zulmi et al., 2021; Schloemer-Jarvis et al., 2022). DIHRPs are a set of systematic management activities designed to address the needs and rights of EWDs, while promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace (Zulmi et al., 2021; Schloemer-Jarvis et al., 2022). As a result, DIHRPs demonstrate significant potential for helping EWDs improve their knowledge, skills, motivation, and overall work-life quality (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015; Tuan et al., 2021). However, existing research has not yet explored the relationship between DIHRPs and job well-being of EWDs. Therefore, this study introduces DIHRPs to investigate their impact on the job well-being of EWDs.

Based on the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), human resource practices function as key organizational resources that provide employees with various resources (e.g., instrumental and psychosocial resources) (Cavanagh et al., 2017; Garavan et al., 2026). Following this logic, DIHRPs can be viewed as a critical job resource that supports employees in achieving work goals, alleviates job stress, and fosters personal growth and development, ultimately enhancing their thriving at work (Zhu et al., 2019; Colombi Evangelista et al., 2025). Thriving at work refers to a dynamic psychological state characterized by the dual experiences of vitality and learning (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Singh & Keshari, 2026). According to the COR theory, thriving at work, as a form of personal resource, contributes to creating "resource caravans" that lead to positive outcomes such as job well-being (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Okros & Virga, 2023). However, few studies have focused on how DIHRPs lead to the job well-being of EWDs via thriving at work. Therefore, this study attempts to explore the mediating role of thriving at work in the relationship between DIHRPs and the job well-being of EWDs.

Furthermore, the implementation of DIHRPs within organizations provides EWDs with essential resources (e.g., buddy systems, flexible work hours, and supervisory coaching) and support (e.g., the adoption of disability inclusion principles and constructive feedback) (Zulmi et al., 2021; Tuan et al., 2021). According to the COR theory, perceived organizational support is a key variable in the psychological connection between employees and organizations (Sun et al., 2024; Guo et al., 2026). Therefore, this study proposes that DIHRPs (hard rules) serve as a critical source of resource gain, primarily by enhancing perceived organizational support (soft support), jointly shaping employees' thriving at work (Zhao et al., 2025; Deb Biswas & Sengupta, 2025). When EWDs perceive higher organizational support, they are more likely to interpret DIHRPs as valuable organizational investments and respond more actively to these inclusive practices, thereby strengthening the positive effect of DIHRPs on thriving at work. In contrast, when EWDs perceive lower organizational support, they may be skeptical of DIHRPs, viewing them as merely symbolic and ineffective, which diminishes the motivation for this exchange. Therefore, this study incorporates perceived

organizational support as a critical moderator to investigate its boundary condition in the relationship between DIHRPs and the thriving at work of EWDs.

In summary, this research contributes to existing literature in several ways. First, this study enriches the human resource practices literature by focusing on exploring DIHRPs' impact on the job well-being of EWDs. Second, this study examines the mediating role of thriving at work in the relationship between DIHRPs and job well-being of EWDs. By doing so, this study extends the theoretical understanding of how and why different human resource practices are related to employees' job well-being. Third, this study investigates perceived organizational support as a boundary condition that moderates the direct effects of DIHRPs on thriving at work and the indirect effect of DIHRPs on job well-being via thriving at work. Finally, this research underscores the relevance of COR theory in human resource management research by showing how organizational resources can foster personal resources, which in turn promote job well-being. This further demonstrates the applicability of COR theory in explaining how DIHRPs shape EWDs' job well-being through resource gain processes.

2 Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1 DIHRPs and job well-being

DIHRPs refer to an organizational strategy anchored in eliminating barriers, ensuring equitable participation, and optimizing the potential of EWDs across all areas of human resource management, thereby enhancing their well-being and career development (Tuan et al., 2021; Schloemer-Jarvis et al., 2022). Compared with other human resource practices, DIHRPs place greater emphasis on the abilities and potential of EWDs, shifting attention away from the "dis" in "disability," which makes them particularly relevant to disability management research (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015; Tuan et al., 2021). Scholars have explored the potential outcomes of DIHRPs and advanced disability management research in this context (Luu, 2018; Schloemer-Jarvis et al., 2022). Previous research has noted that DIHRPs can create supportive and equitable work environments by removing workplace barriers, providing developmental opportunities, and facilitating the social inclusion of EWDs (Tuan et al., 2021). Additionally, DIHRPs can also facilitate positive employee outcomes, such as job well-being, work engagement, organizational identification, and work–family enrichment (Luu, 2021; Kersten et al., 2023; Tuan et al., 2021).

Job well-being reflects employees' positive emotions concerning their workplace, encompassing job satisfaction, positive emotions, and affective experiences related to work (Singh & Keshari, 2026). Job well-being involves employees' sense of meaningfulness at work, enjoyment of work activities, opportunities for growth and development, and satisfaction derived from job responsibilities and achievements (Zheng et al., 2015). Thus, although subjective and psychological well-being are also important in the workplace context, scholars have increasingly focused specifically on job well-being (Li & Lin, 2021; Hamid, 2026). Job well-being has been confirmed to enhance performance and virtuousness (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021; Khalid & Syed, 2024), improve individual intentions and engagement (Khalid & Syed, 2024; Viot & Benraiss-Noailles, 2025), reduce turnover intentions, and enhance employee retention (Cho, 2024; Chen et al., 2023).

COR theory argues that individuals strive to obtain, retain, protect, and develop resources they value, such as time, energy, and support (Hobfoll, 2001; Garavan et al., 2026). EWDs who perceive the presence of DIHRPs are more likely to experience fewer psychological strains arising from workplace barriers, exclusion, and uncertainty, as these practices help prevent resource loss by providing equitable access to workplace resources and reducing the effort required to cope with adverse work conditions (Luu, 2021; Tuan et al., 2021). By minimizing unnecessary resource depletion, DIHRPs allow EWDs to conserve valuable psychological resources, which may reduce anxiety and foster greater self-efficacy and confidence in managing both work-related and personal challenges. Such resource preservation can help EWDs maintain a more positive psychological state and develop more favorable evaluations of their work experiences, thereby enhancing their job well-being. Meanwhile, based on the gain spiral tenet of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Halbesleben et al., 2014), when EWDs view DIHRPs as an initial resource reserve, they can accumulate more job-related resources. Such accumulated resources not only reduce work insecurity but also satisfy EWDs' needs for competence and relatedness, ultimately leading to higher job well-being. Based on previous research, this study hypothesizes that:

H1: DIHRPs positively influence job well-being.

2.2 Mediating role of thriving at work

Thriving at work is a dynamic psychological state characterized by growth and development, encompassing two key dimensions: learning and vitality (Spreitzer et al., 2005; Okros & Virgă, 2025). Vitality reflects a sense of being energetic and positively engaged, while learning is the process of building confidence by acquiring knowledge and enhancing capability (Lu et al., 2025). In subsequent seminal work, scholars have conceptualized thriving at work as an adaptive function and also distinguished it from resilience, flourishing, flow, subjective well-being, and self-actualization (Spreitzer et al., 2005; Ding & Liu, 2023). Furthermore, thriving at work also seems to be necessary for other desirable states (e.g., engagement; Jiang et al., 2021), processes (e.g., innovative work behavior; Kim & Beehr, 2023; Lu et al., 2025), outcomes in the work domain (e.g., job satisfaction, career outcomes and task performance; Jiang et al., 2021; Hussain et al., 2022; Okros & Virga, 2023) and in the life domain (e.g., health and family role performance; Yang et al., 2023).

According to COR theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Porath et al., 2022), DIHRPs, as organizationally provided resources, foster EWDs' thriving at work. On the one hand, DIHRPs help EWDs obtain valuable resources, such as knowledge, skills, and interpersonal assistance from the organization, which can enhance their capacity to learn and adapt in the workplace (Luu, 2019; Tuan et al., 2021). Meanwhile, by embracing these organizational resources, EWDs can avoid expending cognitive resources on concerns about exclusion, and become more receptive to learning opportunities, fostering continuous learning at work (Porath et al., 2022; Van Berkel & Breit, 2026). On the other hand, according to COR theory, DIHRPs, as organizational resources (Meijerink et al., 2020), support EWDs in achieving work-related goals (e.g. flexible workplaces), reducing stressful job demands (e.g. accessible and equitable recruitment and selection practices), and realizing personal growth (e.g. training and career development opportunities) (Zulmi et al., 2021). Such resource support enables EWDs to accumulate positive psychological resources, which in turn promotes the generation of work vitality. Collectively, DIHRPs can equip EWDs with necessary resources, which not only maintain their vitality and learning but also enhance their thriving in the workplace.

Drawing on COR theory, EWDs with sufficient personal resources (i.e., thriving at work) are more likely to achieve higher job well-being (Hobfoll, 2001). First, vitality, a core component of thriving at work, serves as a valuable resource that enables EWDs to engage actively in work and accumulate further psychological resources, such as feeling good and functioning well (Peethambaran et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2025). The psychological resource derived from vitality enables EWDs to devote greater attention to managing work demands and disability-related challenges, allowing them to accumulate further personal well-being through successful coping experiences (Tuan et al., 2021; Peethambaran et al., 2023). Furthermore, the learning dimension of thriving equips EWDs with the knowledge and skills necessary for enhancing competencies. Continuous learning acts as a resource accumulation process, enhancing EWDs' confidence in their ability to effectively cope with workplace demands (Spreitzer et al., 2005; Li & Lin, 2021). These newly acquired resources further strengthen their capacity to overcome disability-related barriers and contribute to positive work experiences, thereby enhancing job well-being (Kultalahti et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2025). Based on the above conclusions, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Thriving at work mediates the relationship between DIHRPs and job well-being.

2.3 Moderating effect of perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support describes how employees view the extent to which their organization offers assistance, values their efforts and cares about their welfare (Jeong et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026). Previous research argued that perceived organizational support is conceptually distinct from other workplace relational constructs, because it reflects employees' overall perception of organizational care and recognition rather than support derived from specific individuals or procedures (Kurtessis et al., 2017). For example, unlike supervisory support, which primarily emphasizes employees' relationships with direct leaders, perceived organizational support captures employees' broader interpretation of organizational treatment and resource provision (Cheng et al., 2026). Moreover, perceived organizational support encompasses important socioemotional and instrumental resources, such as recognition, respect, care, and access to supportive organizational practices, which are essential for employees' positive workplace experiences (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Prior studies have widely demonstrated that perceived organizational support positively influences employees' attitudes, motivation, well-being, and work-related behaviors (Cheng et al., 2026; Meng et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2024; Jeong et al., 2026).

Consistent with the COR theory, perceived organizational support may function as a valuable resource that provides employees with emotional and instrumental support, such as recognition, respect, care, and opportunities to access supportive organizational practices (Eisenberger et al., 2020). When EWDs perceive abundant supportive resources from their organizations, they believe that their organizations value their contributions and are concerned about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Côté et al., 2021). In this situation, EWDs tend to interpret DIHRPs as sincere organizational assistance rather than compulsory formal compliance tasks. From the perspective of COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), the combination of perceived organizational support and DIHRPs provides EWDs with complementary organizational resources, amplifying resource gain and motivating them to further invest these resources in personal energetic and work-related learning (Guan & Frenkel, 2021). Therefore, DIHRPs are more likely to promote thriving at work among EWDs with high perceived organizational support. On the contrary, EWDs with low levels of perceived organizational support have fewer perceived organizational resources and are less likely to view DIHRPs as meaningful resources for addressing workplace challenges and personal development. Therefore, EWDs with low levels of perceived organizational support may still perceive greater difficulties in utilizing DIHRPs to overcome workplace challenges and achieve personal development, which may result in a weaker effect of DIHRPs on thriving at work. To sum up, we hypothesize that:

H3a: Perceived organizational support positively moderates the relationship between DIHRPs and thriving at work, such that the effect of DIHRPs on thriving at work is stronger when the level of perceived organizational support is high.

Furthermore, this study proposes a moderated mediation model; that is, this study proposes that perceived organizational support moderates the mediating effect of thriving at work on the relationship between DIHRPs and job well-being. Based on COR theory, various types of resources may be complementary, thus increasing the value of each other (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Perceived organizational support, as a valuable social resource, can serve as a critical facilitator of DIHRPs' effectiveness. Therefore, EWDs with high perceived organizational support are less constrained by concerns about potential resource loss and are more likely to utilize the job resources provided by DIHRPs.

This enables them to engage with their work, thereby fostering thriving at work (Guan & Frenkel, 2021). As they accumulate such resources, their job well-being is enhanced accordingly. Furthermore, high perceived organizational support not only meets EWDs’ social and emotional needs (e.g., respect and belonging, providing psychological resources, and fostering reciprocal exchange), but also strengthens the synergistic value of DIHRPs-related resources. This enhances the positive relationship between DIHRPs and thriving at work, promoting resource gain spirals that ultimately improve job well-being (Deb Biswas & Sengupta, 2025). In contrast, when perceived organizational support is low, there is less recognition, respect, and emotional support available for EWDs. In such an environment, the resources provided by DIHRPs may not be insufficient to generate thriving at work, because EWDs need to allocate additional personal resources to cope with barriers such as hindered goal achievement, conflicting interests, and mistreatment (Gibney et al., 2009, 2011). Consequently, reduced thriving at work may limit EWDs’ ability to experience positive psychological states and derive fulfillment from their work, ultimately diminishing their job well-being (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Thus, we hypothesize:

H3b: Perceived organizational support moderates the mediation effect of thriving at work on the relationship between DIHRPs and job well-being, such that the mediation effect is stronger when the perceived organizational support is high rather than low.

Figure 1 depicts the research model proposed in this study.

[Insert Fig. 1 here]

3 Methods

3.1 Sample and data collection

This study collected empirical data from EWDs working in enterprises located in Jiangsu and Hubei, China, using a questionnaire survey method. To ensure the validity of the sample, the study selected enterprises that had implemented DIHRPs and related policies, with EWDs accounting for more than 30% of the workforce. This criterion was adopted to ensure that participating organizations had sufficient experience implementing disability-inclusive practices. Prior to the formal survey, the research team contacted the responsible persons or HRM departments of the enterprises to clarify the purpose, research questions, and subjects of the survey before the survey occurred. Informed consent was obtained from all participants on a voluntary basis.

To reduce the common method bias, data collection for this study was conducted at two time points. This study collected data through a two-stage questionnaire survey. In the first stage, data on DIHRPs, perceived organizational support, and demographic information were collected. A total of 330 questionnaires were distributed to EWDs, and 305 questionnaires were returned. After excluding questionnaires with substantial missing data or obvious response patterns, 287 valid questionnaires were retained. In the second stage, questionnaires were distributed to the respondents who had completed the first-stage survey to collect data on thriving at work and job well-being. A total of 287 questionnaires were distributed, and 272 questionnaires were returned. After eliminating invalid responses, 267 valid questionnaires were retained for the final analysis.

The sample characteristics are presented in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of respondents.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	169	63.3
	Female	98	36.7
Age	20–30	35	13.1
	31–40	79	29.6
	41–50	121	45.3
	51 years and above	32	12.0
Education level	High school or below	182	68.2
	Associate degree	33	12.3
	Bachelor's degree	23	8.6
	Master's degree or above	29	10.9
Types of disabilities	Visual impairment	25	9.3
	Hearing impairment	75	28.1
	Speech impairment	55	20.6
	Physical disability	88	33.0
	Others	24	9.0
Organizational tenure	5 years or below	50	18.7
	6–10	106	39.7
	11–15	84	31.5
	More than 15 years	27	10.1
Job position	Non-managerial employee	224	83.9
	Frontline manager	31	11.6
	Middle manager	9	3.4
	Senior manager	3	1.1
Types of ownership	Private-owned enterprise	204	76.4
	State-owned enterprise	36	13.5
	Others	27	10.1
Industry	Manufacturing sector	133	49.8
	Service sector	38	14.2
	Construction sector	43	16.1
	Others	53	19.9

Based on the descriptive statistics presented in the demographic table, respondents generally have relatively lower levels of education, and the proportion of managerial personnel is comparatively small. In terms of industry distribution, the majority of EWDs are employed in the manufacturing sector, while their representation in other industries remains limited. Additionally, private enterprises account for more than 50% of the sample. This pattern is consistent with the labor-intensive nature of the manufacturing industry, suggesting that the sample distribution aligns well with real-world conditions.

3.2 Measures

All the scales were borrowed from previous studies and were well validated before. All the items in this research were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

3.2.1 Disability-inclusive human resource practices

DIHRPs were measured by a five-item scale developed by Boehm et al. (2014). One sample item was “my company offers disability-inclusive recruiting activities”. In this study, Cronbach’s α of the DIHRPs scale was 0.933.

3.2.2 Thriving at work

A 10-item scale from Porath et al. (2012) was employed to assess thriving at work. One sample item was “My knowledge, skills, and abilities match the requirements of my job.”. Cronbach’s α of the scale was 0.935.

3.2.3 Perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support was measured by the scale developed by Hayton et al. (2012) including 4 items. For example, “When I need special assistance, my organization is willing to help me”. Cronbach’s α in this scale was 0.913.

3.2.4 Job well-being

The measurement scale developed by Yang (2014) is adopted to measure job well-being, including 4 items. For example, “Overall, I feel happy at work”. Cronbach’s α in this study was 0.933.

3.2.5 Control variables

Referring to previous research (Tuan et al., 2021; Booth & Lup, 2024; Meng et al., 2024), this study selects gender, age, education level, type of disability, organizational tenure, job position, ownership type, and industry as control variables.

4 Results

4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS 29.0 software, and the specific results are presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows the results of the CFA. The four-factor model($\chi^2/df = 1.860$, TLI = 0.957, CFI = 0.963, IFI = 0.964, RMSEA = 0.057, RMR = 0.048)had a better-fitting effect compared with the other models. Thus, the model demonstrated acceptable discriminant validity among the core constructs. Additionally, a measurement model with the addition of a latent common method variance (CMV) factor must not significantly improve the fit over our measurement model without CMV. With a latent common method variance factor, we add a CMV factor to determine if it significantly improves the fit compared with a measurement model without this factor. We compared Models 1 and 5 (Table 2), the addition of a latent common method factor did not substantially improve model fit, as indicated by the small changes in RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, TLI, and IFI ($\Delta RMSEA = 0.006$, $\Delta SRMR = 0.005$, $\Delta CFI = 0.010$, $\Delta TLI = 0.008$, $\Delta IFI = 0.009$). The addition of the latent CMV factor did not result in a substantial improvement in model fit, suggesting that common method variance is unlikely to pose a serious threat to the results.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Table 2
Results of confirmatory factor analysis.

Models	χ^2	χ^2/df	TLI	CFI	IFI	RMSEA	RMR
Models 1: Four-factor model	399.853	1.860	0.957	0.963	0.964	0.057	0.029
Models 2: Three-factor model	1170.025	5.367	0.781	0.811	0.812	0.128	0.095
Models 3: Two-factor model	1607.942	7.309	0.683	0.725	0.726	0.154	0.067
Models 4: One-factor model	2233.770	10.108	0.543	0.601	0.603	0.185	0.103
Models 5: Four-factor model + CMV Theoretical Model	327.389	1.705	0.965	0.973	0.973	0.051	0.024

Note: Four-factor model: DIHRPs, POS, JWB, TW; three-factor model: POS–DIHRPs, TW, JWB; two-factor model: POS–JWB–TW, DIHRPs; one-factor model: DIHRPs–POS–JWB–TW; DIHRPs = disability-inclusive human resource practices, JWB = job well-being, TW = thriving at work, and POS = perceived organizational support.

4.2 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

This study employed SPSS 26.0 to examine the relationships among DIHRPs, perceived organizational support, job well-being, and thriving at work. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 3. The findings indicate that DIHRPs are significantly and positively correlated with thriving at work($r = 0.325$, $p < 0.01$)and with job well-being among EWDs– $r = 0.220$, $p < 0.01$ –. In addition, thriving at work is

significantly and positively related to job well-being ($r = 0.496, p < 0.01$), and perceived organizational support is also significantly and positively associated with job well-being ($r = 0.570, p < 0.01$). This shows that our research hypotheses are preliminarily affirmed.

[Insert Table 3 here]

Table 3
Mean, standard deviation and correlation values.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Gender	1											
2 Age	-0.053	1										
3 Education level	0.010	-0.466**	1									
4 Types of disability	-0.040	0.145*	-0.248**	1								
5 Organizational tenure	0.064	0.269**	-0.408**	0.171**	1							
6 Job position	-0.094	-0.005	0.109	0.080	0.052	1						
7 Types of ownership	-0.021	0.152*	-0.270**	0.042	0.225**	-0.001	1					
8 Industry	-0.052	0.131*	-0.353**	-0.105	0.149*	-0.004	0.222**	1				
9 DIHRPs	0.052	-0.098	0.113	-0.021	0.029	0.041	-0.109	-0.073	1			
10 POS	0.084	-0.155*	0.266**	-0.002	-0.076	-0.041	-0.130*	-0.224**	0.206**	1		
11 TW	0.071	-0.106	0.100	0.013	-0.006	-0.044	0.064	-0.037	0.325**	0.471**	1	
12 JWB	0.035	-0.113	0.185**	-0.069	-0.096	0.032	0.007	-0.106	0.220**	0.570**	0.496**	1
M	0.630	2.560	1.630	3.040	2.330	1.220	1.970	3.170	3.384	3.052	3.164	2.864
SD	0.483	0.867	1.042	1.161	0.895	0.553	0.485	1.411	0.790	0.581	0.600	0.812
Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; DIHRPs = disability-inclusive human resource practices, JWB = job well-being, TW = thriving at work, and POS = perceived organizational support.												

4.3 Hypothesis test

In this study, Hypotheses H1, H2, H3a and H3b were examined employing PROCESS Macro 4.2. Following the guidelines by Hayes (2018), we selected “Model 4” and used the bootstrap analysis with 5000 bootstrapping samples to examine the direct and indirect influences simultaneously. As shown in Table 4.

4.3.1 Direct effect

H1 argues that DIHRPs have a positive impact on job well-being. As shown in Table 4, the total impact of DIHRPs on job well-being is significant ($\beta = 0.215$ SE = 0.062, $p = 0.001$, 95%CI [0.092, 0.337]), excluding 0. Thus, H1 is supported. In terms of control variables, we have not found any significant effect of controlled variables on the dependent variable.

4.3.2 Mediating effect tests

H2 argues that DIHRPs indirectly influence job well-being through thriving at work. As presented in Table 4, after adding thriving at work as a mediator, the direct impact of DIHRPs on job well-being is not significant ($\beta = 0.058$, SE = 0.059, 95%CI [-0.058, 0.174]). Meanwhile, the indirect effect of DIHRPs on job well-being through thriving at work is significant (Indirect effect = 0.157, SE = 0.039, 95%CI [0.086, 0.242]), as the bootstrap confidence interval does not include zero. The result indicates that thriving at work fully mediates the association between DIHRPs to job well-being. Therefore, H2 is supported. In terms of controlling variables, we have not found any significant effect of control variables on the dependent variable.

The results are presented in Table 4.

[Insert Table 4 here]

Table 4
The direct and the mediating effect.

Specific path	Relationship	Effect	SE	Boot95%CI
Indirect effect	DIHRPs Thriving at work Job well-being	0.157	0.039	[0.086, 0.242]
Direct effect	DIHRPs Job well-being	0.058	0.059	[-0.058, 0.174]
Total effect	DIHRPs Job well-being	0.215	0.062	[0.092, 0.337]
Note: DIHRPs = disability-inclusive human resource practices.				

4.3.3 Moderation analysis

We used PROCESS “Model 1” to test H3a. As presented in Table 5. H3a predicts that the interaction between DIHRPs and perceived organizational support was significant ($\beta = 0.234$, $SE = 0.059$, $p = 0.001$, 95%CI [0.117, 0.350]). To further interpret the nature of the interaction effect, we conducted a simple slope analysis. The results showed that when perceived organizational support was low, the relationship between DIHRPs and thriving at work was not significant ($\beta = 0.045$, $SE = 0.055$, $p = 0.413$, 95%CI [-0.063, 0.152]). However, when perceived organizational support was high, DIHRPs had a stronger and significant positive effect on thriving at work ($\beta = 0.316$, $SE = 0.051$, $p < 0.001$, 95%CI [0.216, 0.416]). These findings indicate that the positive effect of DIHRPs on thriving at work becomes stronger when employees perceive higher levels of perceived organizational support (see Fig. 2).

[Insert Table 5 here]

Table 5
Moderating effect of perceived organizational support.

Perceived organizational support	Effect	SE	Boot95%CI
DIHRPs Thriving at work			
Low POS (- 1 SD)	0.045	0.055	[-0.063, 0.152]
High POS (+ 1 SD)	0.316	0.051	[0.216, 0.416]
Note: DIHRPs = disability-inclusive human resource practices, POS = perceived organizational support.			
[Insert Fig. 2 here]			

4.3.4 Moderated mediation effects test

Based on the results of the moderating effect test for Hypothesis 3a, perceived organizational support is found to moderate the relationship between DIHRPs and thriving at work. To validate H3b, which posits a moderated mediation effect, we used Model 7 of the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes and Preacher (2010). Table 6 presents the bootstrapped conditional indirect effects of DIHRPs on job well-being via thriving at work at different levels of perceived organizational support. The results show that the indirect effect of DIHRPs on job well-being through thriving at work varies across different levels of perceived organizational support. Specifically, when perceived organizational support was low (-1 SD), the indirect effect was not significant (indirect effect = 0.028, $SE = 0.044$, 95%CI [- 0.058, 0.116]). However, when perceived organizational support was at the mean level, the indirect effect became significant (indirect effect = 0.114, $SE = 0.035$, 95%CI [0.051, 0.188]). Furthermore, when perceived organizational support was high (+ 1 SD), the indirect effect became stronger and remained significant (indirect effect = 0.200, $SE = 0.053$, 95%CI [0.101, 0.309]). Moreover, the index of moderated mediation was significant (index = 0.148, $SE = 0.058$, 95%CI [0.037, 0.264]), as the confidence interval did not include zero. These results indicate that perceived organizational support significantly moderates the indirect effect of DIHRPs on job well-being through thriving at work, such that the mediating effect of thriving at work becomes stronger when employees perceive higher levels of perceived organizational support. Therefore, H3b was supported.

Table 6
Results of the Moderated Mediation Analysis.

Perceived organizational support	DIHRPs Thriving at work Job well-being		
	Effect	SE	Boot95%CI
Low (– 1 SD)	0.028	0.044	[-0.058, 0.116]
Mean	0.114	0.035	[0.051, 0.188]
High (+ 1 SD)	0.200	0.053	[0.101, 0.309]
Index	0.148	0.058	[0.037, 0.264]
Note: DIHRPs = disability-inclusive human resource practices.			

5 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical contributions

First, this study examines the impact of DIHRPs on job well-being among EWDs in the Chinese context, thereby extending the emerging literature on human resource practices. Investigating the relationship between DIHRPs and job well-being is particularly important because DIHRPs can provide EWDs with valuable organizational resources while recognizing and utilizing the abilities and potential of EWDs (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015; Tuan et al., 2021). Existing research on DIHRPs has primarily focused on issues such as workforce inclusion, employment participation, recruitment and staffing practices, and the implementation of disability-related HR policies and practices (Schloemer-Jarvis et al., 2022; Kersten et al., 2023; Van Berkel & Breit, 2026). Although Tuan et al. (2021) linked DIHRPs to employee well-being in the public sector, research examining how DIHRPs influence EWDs' job well-being, particularly in the Chinese context, remains scarce. By identifying job well-being as a critical outcome of DIHRPs, the present study extends current understanding of the job well-being implications of DIHRPs and contributes to the broader human resource management and well-being literature.

Second, the mediating role of thriving at work in the relationship between DIHRPs and job well-being is examined. This addresses the "HRM black box" issue, which highlights the importance of identifying the underlying mechanisms through which human resource practices influence employee outcomes (Jiang et al., 2012, 2013). Prior research on DIHRPs has primarily examined how inclusive practices improve EWDs' workplace experiences by enhancing perceived organizational resources, reducing workplace barriers, and fostering positive attitudes toward the organization (Luu, 2019, 2021; Tuan et al., 2021). However, limited attention has been paid to employees' dynamic psychological experiences that reflect personal growth and development at work. By integrating DIHRPs with thriving at work, this study extends prior research by demonstrating how inclusive human resource practices promote EWDs' job well-being through enhanced vitality and learning, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological pathways linking DIHRPs to employee well-being.

Third, this study advances the literature by clarifying the contextual role of perceived organizational support in shaping the effectiveness of DIHRPs. Previous research has pointed out a gap between formal HR policies for EWDs and the support they actually perceive (Kulkarni & Valk, 2010; McDowell & Fossey, 2015). Accordingly, employees' subjective perceptions play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of human resource practices (Pak & Chang, 2023; Dawson et al., 2024). Perceived organizational support, as an employee's overall evaluation of organizational care, shapes how human resource practices are interpreted and acted upon (Rudolph & Zacher, 2026). Building on this, the present study examines perceived organizational support as a key contextual factor in DIHRPs. The results show that perceived organizational support strengthens the positive effect of DIHRPs on thriving at work and enhances the indirect effect of DIHRPs on job well-being through thriving at work. By integrating perceived organizational support into the DIHRPs framework, this study bridges the gap between formal HR practices and employees' subjective perceptions and provides a clearer understanding of how DIHRPs translate into well-being outcomes.

Fourth, our research extends COR theory beyond its traditional focus on stress and coping, through conceptualizing DIHRPs as critical organizational resources and connecting these with personal resources through a resource caravan passageway to impact EWDs' job well-being. This perspective aligns with emerging efforts to embed COR theory within human resource management research (e.g. Xu et al. 2024; Lu et al. 2025) and highlights the capacity of HR practices to cultivate employees' personal resource reservoirs. In particular, personal resources developed through thriving at work, reflected in enhanced vitality and learning, serve as a central mechanism through which organizational support is translated into improved well-being outcomes, thereby reinforcing positive resource gain spirals.

5.2 Practical implications

First, organizations should integrate a disability focus into human resources strategy and translate it into DIHRPs, as well as further translate such practices into personal resources for EWDs. Organizations that aim to promote the performance of such employees should activate contextual mechanisms across all human resources processes to nurture their psychological and physical well-being. For example, inclusive

recruitment should not only remove barriers but also signal equal opportunity and respect, helping EWDs develop an early sense of belonging. Training initiatives should go beyond skill provision to emphasize growth and empowerment, reinforcing the organization's commitment to long-term development. Similarly, performance management should highlight fairness and recognition of individual contributions, while compensation systems should transparently reflect equity and respect, strengthening employees' trust in the organization. As EWDs accumulate job resources through DIHRPs, they may become more inclined to proactively acquire additional resources, sustain vitality, and engage in continuous learning, thereby enhancing their job well-being.

Second, organizations should actively foster thriving at work among EWDs. This study suggests that thriving at work is a key psychological pathway through which DIHRPs translate into job well-being. Organizations should create conditions that both sustain employees' energy and support their ongoing development. Providing timely support, recognizing individual contributions, and granting appropriate job autonomy can help EWDs feel more confident and engaged, enabling them to invest effort more actively in their work. At the same time, offering continuous learning opportunities, such as accessible training, developmental feedback, and clear growth pathways, allows employees to build competence and experience a sense of progress. Importantly, thriving at work is a dynamic state that requires ongoing reinforcement. Organizations should establish regular feedback mechanisms to understand employees' experiences and adjust DIHRPs accordingly, ensuring that employees can continuously experience both vitality and learning. By cultivating an environment that simultaneously energizes and develops employees, organizations can effectively enhance thriving at work and, in turn, improve EWDs' job well-being.

5.3 Limitations and future studies

First, this study primarily relied on self-report data, which may limit the ability to capture the dynamic relationships among variables. While COR theory highlights that external resources are important to the accumulation of personal resources, this study does not allow us to draw conclusions about the causal relationships between the two sets of resources. It is therefore important for future research to employ more sophisticated research designs, including longitudinal investigations, experiments, case studies and multiple data sources to measure mediators, thus enhancing the ability to infer causality and the accuracy of the findings.

Second, grounded in COR theory, we used thriving at work construct developed by Spreitzer et al. (2005), which reflects a predominantly positive psychological state. Although this research has adopted a resource gain perspective, this view falls within a relatively narrow scope, which has failed to consider the parallel and potentially competing resource loss pathway. As a result, scholars have called for the understanding of resource depletion processes in explaining employees' job well-being (Hayat & Afshari, 2021). Once a more comprehensive framework is developed, the mediating mechanisms underlying the effects of organizational practices could be further explored using an integrative model. Future research could evaluate both gain and loss dimensions of resources and their various mediating effects on the relationship between DIHRPs and EWDs' job well-being.

Third, this study does not sufficiently account for individual differences among EWDs. Given that cultural background shapes how employees interpret and respond to perceived organizational support, and that employees in Western cultures are more likely to emphasize independence and interpret their relationship with organizations based on reciprocity principles (Rockstuhl et al., 2020), future research should concentrate on EWDs in Western cultures to test whether our findings hold. By the same token, since types of disabilities are associated with different levels of focus on opportunities or approaches to exploiting them (Klangboonkrong & Baines, 2022), forthcoming studies could try to replicate our findings with a more comprehensive sample in terms of disability types. More broadly, research is also needed to challenge the assumption of homogeneity among EWDs, through, for example, the integration of individual differences and specific subgroups (e.g., different types of disabilities and employees at different career stages) in future research on disability-inclusive human resource management practices (Richard et al., 2021).

6 Conclusion

Based on COR theory in the Chinese context, this study constructed a theoretical model to explore the impact of DIHRPs on EWDs' job well-being and examined the mediating effect of thriving at work and the moderating effect of perceived organizational support. Results showed that DIHRPs were positively associated with job well-being. Thriving at work fully mediated the relationship between DIHRPs and job well-being. Moreover, perceived organizational support strengthened the positive effect of DIHRPs on thriving at work, such that the relationship was stronger when perceived organizational support was high. In addition, perceived organizational support moderated the indirect effect of DIHRPs on job well-being through thriving at work, indicating that the mediating effect of thriving at work was stronger under conditions of high perceived organizational support.

Declarations

Funding Declaration

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Ethics approval and consent to participate

This questionnaire-based survey research was reviewed and granted exemption from full ethical review by the Institutional Review Board of China Three Gorges University. All procedures performed in this study were in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to questionnaire completion. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and all responses would remain anonymous.

Consent for publication

Not Applicable

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Data Availability declaration

The raw survey data generated and analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to privacy restrictions for human participants. De-identified data may be available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Figures

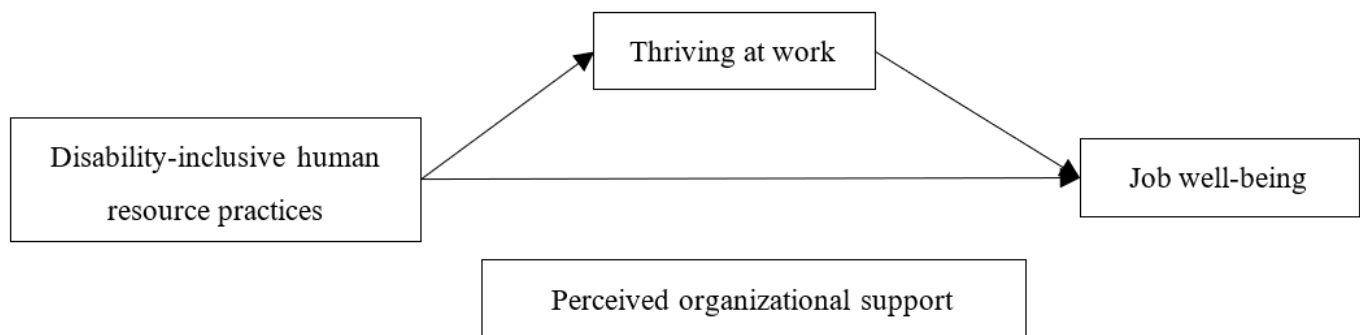


Figure 1

Research model.

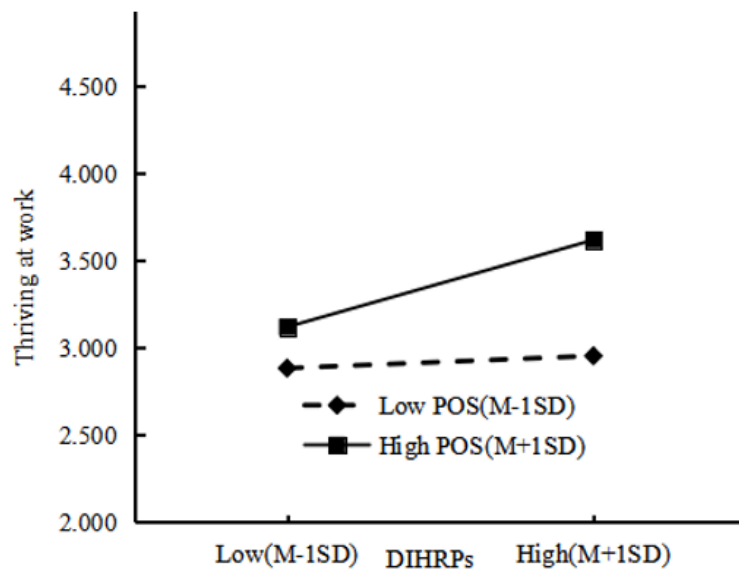


Figure 2

Interaction effects of perceived organizational support and DIHRPs on thriving at work.