

The Impact of Cognitive Creativity and Organizational Intelligence on Human Resource Retention: Investigating the Mediating Role of Psychological Well-being

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Abstract

Introduction: Retaining skilled employees is essential for sustainable organizational success in today's competitive business environment. This study investigated the impact of cognitive creativity and organizational intelligence on human resource retention, with psychological well-being examined as a mediator.

Method: This descriptive-correlational study was conducted in 2025. The statistical population consisted of 547 employees at Mazgroup Company in Tehran, Iran. Using simple random sampling and a priori power analysis (power=0.80, $\alpha=0.01$), a sample of 327 employees was selected. Data were collected using the Cognitive Creativity Test, the Organizational Intelligence Questionnaire, Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, and the Employee Retention Questionnaire. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) was employed to test the hypothesized relationships and mediation effects.

Results: The findings demonstrated significant positive direct relationships between cognitive creativity, organizational intelligence, and human resource retention ($P<0.001$). Bootstrapping results confirmed that psychological well-being partially mediated these relationships.

Conclusion: Enhancing cognitive creativity and organizational intelligence directly improves employee retention, with psychological well-being serving as a key underlying mechanism. Organizations should prioritize targeted interventions that foster creative thinking, systemic intelligence, and mental health support to strengthen talent retention.

Keywords: Creativity, Intelligence, Mental Health, Personnel Turnover, Personnel Management

Introduction

In the contemporary competitive and knowledge-based business landscape, financial and technological resources are no longer the sole determinants of a sustainable competitive advantage [1]. Instead, talented and highly skilled human resources have emerged as the primary source of organizational value and innovation [2]. Despite this realization, retaining experienced and well-trained personnel remains a persistent challenge for modern enterprises [3]. This challenge is particularly evident in dynamic corporate environments, where talent attrition leads to diminished productivity, increased recruitment and training costs, and disruptions in organizational performance [4]. For organizations, merely recruiting top talent is insufficient; the fundamental problem lies in designing strategic retention mechanisms that prevent the loss of key human capital [5]. The inability to retain expert employees not only depletes the organization's knowledge base but also negatively impacts the morale of the remaining workforce. To mitigate business risks and maintain market share, it is imperative to move beyond traditional retention strategies and address the deeper cognitive and psychological needs of employees [6].

Human resource retention is a multidimensional construct that reflects an organization's capacity to keep its most valuable employees engaged and loyal over time [7]. A robust retention system is heavily contingent upon perceived organizational support, organizational justice, an empowering culture, and the fulfillment of employees' essential needs [8]. Consequently, long-term retention is inextricably linked to employees' psychological well-being. Psychological well-being encompasses an individual's overall emotional health, sense of purpose, and optimal psychological functioning within the workplace [9]. When organizations actively cultivate environments that nurture mental health, employees experience higher levels of job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation [10]. Conversely, a lack of attention to psychological well-being often precipitates burnout and high turnover intentions [11].

A critical factor that significantly influences both employee well-being and organizational success is cognitive creativity. Distinct from general creativity, which may include artistic or spontaneous forms of expression, cognitive creativity is defined as a complex mental process involving the perception of problems, identification of gaps in existing knowledge, formulation of hypotheses, and effective communication of innovative solutions [13]. From an organizational perspective, this form of creativity enables businesses to develop novel products, identify emerging opportunities, and address complex challenges [14]. Importantly, cognitive creativity extends beyond organizational utility; it plays a vital role in enhancing employees' morale and intrinsic motivation [15]. When employees are encouraged to exercise their creative faculties, they experience a greater sense of autonomy and psychological fulfillment. Despite its strategic importance, cognitive creativity has received remarkably limited empirical attention in the Iranian academic and corporate sectors [16]. Fostering a creatively stimulating environment is increasingly recognized as a potent mechanism for enhancing employee engagement and long-term retention [17].

Parallel to individual cognitive creativity, organizational intelligence serves as a macro-level determinant of human resource retention [18]. Organizational intelligence refers to an institution's collective capacity to process information, adapt to environmental changes, and utilize its intellectual capital to achieve strategic objectives [19]. An intelligent organization is characterized by a shared vision, structural alignment, and a persistent culture of continuous learning [20]. Such organizations are highly adept at recognizing the needs of their workforce and proactively designing systems that support professional growth and psychological safety [21]. By effectively leveraging organizational intelligence, companies can create responsive and transparent work environments that minimize ambiguity and frustration among staff [22]. This systemic capability not only enhances operational efficiency but also cultivates a deeply supportive atmosphere, thereby strengthening employees' psychological well-being and retention intentions [23].

The necessity of this research stems from the critical interplay between individual cognitive factors and broader systemic organizational variables in securing human capital. While previous studies have independently acknowledged the value of creativity, intelligence, and well-being, there is a profound scarcity of comprehensive models examining their interconnected impact on employee retention, particularly within the Iranian corporate context [24]. Understanding these synergistic effects is vital for developing strategic, evidence-based human resource interventions [25]. Enhancing cognitive creativity and organizational intelligence not only addresses complex business challenges but also fulfills the fundamental psychological needs of the workforce, thereby creating a sustainable competitive advantage [26]. The present study aimed to investigate the impact of cognitive creativity and organizational intelligence on employee retention, with a specific focus on the mediating role of employees' psychological well-being.

Method

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design. The statistical population encompassed all 547 male and female employees working at Mazgroup Company in the Mirdamad district of Tehran, Iran, during the 2025 calendar year. The required sample size of 327 was determined *a priori* using G*Power 3.1 software for structural equation modeling, based on an expected medium effect size ($f^2=0.15$, following Cohen's conventions for behavioral research), statistical power of 0.80, alpha level of 0.01, and two predictor variables. Participants were selected through simple random sampling using a computer-generated random number sequence applied to the complete employee roster provided by the human resources department. The final sample comprised 230 men (70.3%) and 97 women (29.7%). Inclusion criteria required participants to be permanent employees with a minimum tenure of one year. Temporary staff were excluded, and questionnaires with more than 10% missing data were removed from the final analysis.

Regarding ethical considerations, all participants were provided with a detailed information sheet explaining the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, right to withdraw at any time without consequence, potential risks and benefits, and strict confidentiality of responses. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to data collection. No financial or material incentives were offered. Data were stored securely on password-protected servers accessible only to the research team, and all identifying information was removed prior to analysis.

Data collection was executed during the spring of 2025. Upon securing formal authorization from Mazgroup's management, the researcher coordinated with the company's human resources department to facilitate systematic distribution of the questionnaires during regular work hours in a quiet and private setting to ensure comfort and response accuracy. The questionnaires were

administered in person, and completed forms were collected immediately and coded anonymously.

The tools used in this study were as follows:

Cognitive Creativity Test: This instrument consists of 60 items designed to measure cognitive creativity across four distinct dimensions: fluency (16 items), flexibility (11 items), originality (22 items), and elaboration (11 items). Respondents rate each item on a three-point scale ranging from 0 to 2, with higher cumulative scores indicating superior levels of cognitive creativity [27]. Previous validation studies in Iran have confirmed its robust psychometric properties through factor analysis [27]. In the current investigation, the questionnaire demonstrated excellent internal consistency, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87.

Albrecht Standard Organizational Intelligence Questionnaire: Organizational intelligence was assessed using Albrecht's 49-item scale, which evaluates seven core components: strategic vision, shared destiny, change tendency, commitment and optimism, alignment/congruence, knowledge development, and performance pressure. Items are scored on a standard five-point Likert scale (1 to 5), where higher mean scores reflect a stronger perception of organizational intelligence [19]. Prior Persian-language studies have reported acceptable reliability ($\alpha=0.86$) [20]. For the present sample, the instrument exhibited strong reliability, with a calculated Cronbach's alpha of 0.83.

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale: This study employed the 18-item short form of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale [28], which has demonstrated strong psychometric properties in Iranian workplace samples and was chosen to minimize respondent burden while adequately capturing the core dimensions of psychological well-being (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance). Responses are scored on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 6 ("Strongly Agree"). Higher overall scores signify a greater level of psychological well-being. This scale has been widely validated in prior psychological research, consistently demonstrating strong psychometric properties and high internal consistency in evaluating mental wellness [29].

Kydet Human Resource Retention Questionnaire: To evaluate employees' intention to stay, the Kydet 10-item questionnaire was utilized. This scale measures the degree of commitment and loyalty an employee feels toward their current organization. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores denoting a greater likelihood of retention [30]. The Persian version of this instrument has consistently shown high reliability in previous research, typically exceeding an alpha of 0.87 [31]. In this study, the questionnaire achieved a very high internal consistency, producing a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90.

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SPSS version 26 and AMOS version 24. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was employed to evaluate the significance of indirect (mediation) effects.

Prior to hypothesis testing, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed for all study variables and demographic characteristics. All statistical assumptions (including normality, multicollinearity, and linearity) were examined and confirmed to be satisfactorily met before proceeding with the main analyses.

Results

The participants in this study comprised 327 employees from Mazgroup Company, with 230 (70.3%) men and 97 (29.7%) women. In terms of educational attainment, 275 (84.1%) held a bachelor's degree, while 52 (15.9%) possessed a master's or doctoral degree. The age distribution was as follows: 108 (33.0%) participants were aged 21–30 years, 151 (46.2%) were 31–40 years, 42 (12.8%) were 41–50 years, and 26 (8.0%) were 51 years or older. Regarding work experience, 95 (29.1%) had 1–5 years, 137 (41.9%) had 6–10 years, 43 (13.1%) had 11–15 years, 37 (11.3%) had 16–20 years, and 15 (4.6%) had 21–30 years of service.

All study variables demonstrated acceptable normality, with skewness and kurtosis values falling within the conventional range of -2 to +2. The mean total scores indicated moderately high levels of psychological well-being ($M=77.22$, $SD=11.70$, out of a possible 108) and human resource retention ($M=38.20$, $SD=7.10$, out of 50). Cognitive creativity showed a relatively high mean total score ($M=78.45$, $SD=12.36$, out of 120), while organizational intelligence reflected a positive overall perception ($M=176.89$, $SD=28.42$, out of 245).

Significant positive correlations were observed among all variables ($P<0.01$), with the strongest relationship between psychological well-being and human resource retention ($r=0.58$) (Table 1). These bivariate findings provide initial empirical support for the hypothesized relationships.

The final structural model demonstrated excellent fit to the empirical data. The χ^2/df ratio was well below the recommended threshold of three, and all incremental fit indices (GFI, IFI, CFI, NFI) exceeded the 0.95 cutoff. Additionally, the RMSEA value of 0.05 indicated a close fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data (Table 2).

All direct paths in the model were statistically significant ($P < 0.001$) and positive in direction (Table 3). Cognitive creativity and organizational intelligence significantly predicted higher levels of psychological well-being, which in turn exerted a strong positive effect on human resource retention. The direct effects of both independent variables on retention remained statistically significant after the inclusion of the mediator, indicating partial mediation rather than full mediation. Bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 resamples confirmed significant indirect effects through psychological well-being for both cognitive creativity and organizational intelligence. Thus, psychological well-being partially mediated the relationships between the predictors and human resource retention.

Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized structural

relationships in the final SEM model, showing standardized path coefficients from cognitive creativity and organizational intelligence to psychological well-being and human resource retention, along with the mediating paths through psychological well-being. The visual model clearly depicts robust positive pathways, with

psychological well-being serving as a central mechanism that links individual cognitive creativity and organizational intelligence to enhanced human resource retention. All paths were statistically significant, and the strong model fit supports the theoretical framework proposed in this study.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, Skewness, Kurtosis, and Pearson Correlations among Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	1	2	3	4
1- Human resource	38.20	7.10	-0.48	0.12	1			
2- Cognitive creativity	78.45	12.36	-0.31	-0.25	0.42**	1		
3- Organizational intelligence	176.89	28.42	-0.27	0.09	0.51**	0.38**	1	
4- Psychological well-being	77.22	11.70	-0.39	0.18	0.58**	0.49**	0.53**	1

** $P < 0.01$

Table 2. Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Final Structural Model

Fit indicators	χ^2/df	GFI	IFI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Model values	2.14	0.96	0.97	0.97	0.95	0.059
Acceptable range	<3	>0.95	>0.95	>0.95	>0.95	<0.08

Table 3. Direct and Indirect (mediated) Paths in the Final Structural Model

Paths	B	SE	β	P
Cognitive creativity $\rightarrow$ Psychological well-being	0.02	0.00	0.47	0.001
Organizational intelligence $\rightarrow$ Psychological well-being	0.51	0.07	0.51	0.001
Psychological well-being $\rightarrow$ Human resource	0.62	0.06	0.55	0.001
Cognitive creativity $\rightarrow$ Human resource	0.01	0.004	0.19	0.001
Organizational intelligence $\rightarrow$ Human resource	0.28	0.08	0.27	0.001
Cognitive creativity $\rightarrow$ Human resource through psychological well-being	0.01	0.003	0.26	0.001
Organizational intelligence $\rightarrow$ Human resource through psychological well-being	0.31	0.05	0.28	0.001

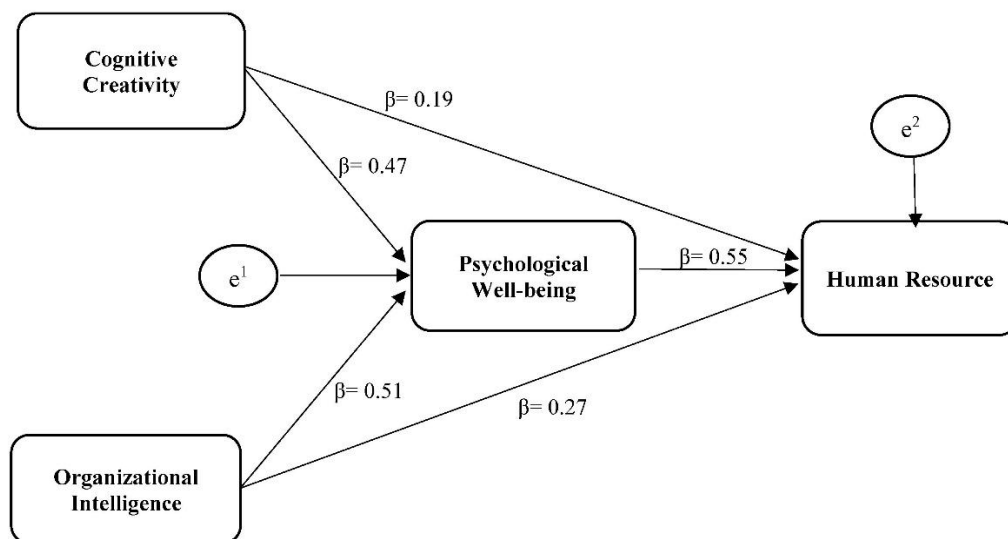


Figure 1. The final structural model of the study.

Discussion

The primary objective of the present study was to elucidate the structural relationships between cognitive creativity, organizational intelligence, and human resource retention, with a specific focus on the mediating role of psychological well-being. By extending beyond conventional retention strategies, this research offers a comprehensive behavioral framework that illustrates how individual cognitive attributes and systemic organizational factors interact to build a resilient and committed workforce.

The results demonstrated a significant positive direct effect of cognitive creativity on human resource retention. Employees who exhibit higher levels of cognitive flexibility and divergent thinking tend to perceive their roles as more engaging and fulfilling. This association is consistent with the observed path coefficients in the structural model. Creative problem-solving fosters greater autonomy and self-actualization, which in turn strengthen intrinsic motivation and emotional attachment to the organization. This finding aligns with previous research [32, 33].

Furthermore, the study revealed a robust positive relationship between organizational intelligence and employee retention. Organizations characterized by high collective intelligence create a stable, transparent, and predictable work environment. The SEM results supported this direct pathway even after accounting for the mediator. These observations are consistent with earlier studies [34, 35].

A key contribution of this research lies in the significant mediating role of psychological well-being. The bootstrapping analysis of the current cross-sectional data indicated that psychological well-being partially mediated the relationships between cognitive creativity and retention, as well as between organizational intelligence and retention. These mediation effects were statistically significant and grounded in the observed correlations and path coefficients. Creative engagement appears to support psychological health by providing outlets for stress and enhancing self-efficacy [36, 37]. Similarly, organizational intelligence likely contributes to well-being through equitable practices and psychological safety, which subsequently promotes retention [38, 39].

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that organizations should move beyond short-term incentives and instead design environments that systematically nurture both individual cognitive creativity and collective organizational intelligence while prioritizing psychological well-being. Targeted interventions, such as creativity training programs, leadership development focused on systemic intelligence, and mental health support initiatives, can serve as powerful levers for improving retention.

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design precludes definitive causal inferences; longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to confirm the directionality of the observed relationships. Second, the reliance on self-reported measures may have introduced common method bias, although anonymity and careful scale selection were employed to mitigate this risk. Third, the sample was drawn exclusively from employees of one company in Tehran, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other industries, organizational sizes, or cultural contexts. Future research should examine these relationships across diverse settings and employ multi-source data (e.g., objective turnover records or supervisor evaluations) to strengthen external validity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study provides evidence that cognitive creativity and organizational intelligence are significant predictors of human resource retention, with psychological well-being serving as a partial mediator of these relationships. When organizations cultivate systemic intelligence and empower creative thinking, they enhance the psychological health of their workforce, which in turn supports sustained employee loyalty. Organizations are encouraged to implement integrated interventions that simultaneously target creative cognition, organizational intelligence, and mental well-

being to strengthen talent retention and achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding this article.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for this study was granted by the Ethics Committee of Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies

During the preparation of this work the authors used Grammarly in order to improve language clarity, grammar, and academic writing style. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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