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The Effect of Psychological Well-Being on Work Responsibility Through Psychological Empowerment in Private Organizations in Iran: The Moderating Role of Negative Perfectionism

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of psychological well-being on increasing work responsibility through psychological empowerment in private organizations in Iran, with particular emphasis on the moderating role of negative perfectionism. This study employed a descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional research design and used structural equation modeling to examine the relationships among the study variables. The statistical population consisted of all employees working in private organizations in Iran and residing in Tehran between July and November 2024. The study sample comprised 192 employees selected through stratified random sampling. The research instruments included the Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB), Psychological Empowerment Scale (PES), Terry-Short et al.'s Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale (PANPS), and Organizational Responsibility Questionnaire (ORQ). SPSS version 27 was used to calculate descriptive statistics, while SmartPLS version 4 was employed to analyze the structural paths among the constructs. The Sobel test was also used to examine the statistical significance of the mediating variable. The significance level was set at .05. According to the findings, negative perfectionism did not have a significant moderating effect on the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable ($p > .05$). Personal growth had a positive and significant indirect effect on responsibility through psychological empowerment as a mediating variable ($\beta = .124$, $p = .002$). Self-acceptance also had a positive and significant indirect effect on responsibility through psychological empowerment ($\beta = .067$, $p = .028$). Similarly, positive relations with others had a positive and significant indirect effect on responsibility through psychological empowerment ($\beta = .069$, $p = .037$). However, psychological empowerment did not significantly mediate the relationships of autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose in life with responsibility ($p > .05$). The findings demonstrated that psychological well-being can enhance employees' work responsibility through only some of its dimensions and through the mediating role of psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment also plays a key role in explaining this relationship, whereas negative perfectionism is associated with lower levels of work responsibility.

Keywords: psychological well-being, psychological empowerment, work responsibility, negative perfectionism

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Introduction

Contemporary organizations operate in environments characterized by rapid technological change, intensified competition, increasing performance expectations, and growing demands for employee adaptability, accountability, and psychological resilience. Under such conditions, organizational

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effectiveness cannot be explained solely by structural resources, technological capacity, or formal management systems; rather, the psychological functioning of employees has become a central determinant of sustainable organizational performance. This issue may be particularly important in private organizations, where employees often work under strong market pressures, performance-based expectations, changing customer demands, and comparatively dynamic employment arrangements. Differences in motivational structures between private, public, and hybrid organizations further indicate that organizational context can influence how employees interpret their work, responsibilities, incentives, and psychological relationship with the organization (1). In parallel, organizational culture and employees' commitment to organizational values have been identified as important factors in shaping employee attitudes and behavioral involvement, suggesting that organizational outcomes depend substantially on the interaction between individual psychological resources and the organizational environment (2). Accordingly, understanding the psychological mechanisms through which employees develop a stronger sense of responsibility toward their work is an important concern for management research, particularly in private-sector contexts where individual initiative, responsibility, and sustained performance are essential for organizational competitiveness.

Among the psychological constructs relevant to employee functioning, psychological well-being has increasingly received attention because it reflects more than the absence of psychological distress and encompasses positive psychological functioning across several domains. Psychological well-being generally includes self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. These dimensions represent employees' ability to maintain a positive evaluation of themselves, establish constructive interpersonal relationships, act with relative psychological independence, effectively manage environmental demands, experience meaningful direction in life, and continue developing their capacities. From an organizational perspective, employees with higher psychological well-being are more likely to experience work as manageable, meaningful, and consistent with personal growth, which may promote more constructive work attitudes and behaviors. Evidence from occupational settings supports the relevance of psychological well-being to important organizational outcomes. For example, psychological well-being has been linked to organizational commitment and job satisfaction among employees, indicating that psychologically healthier employees tend to develop more positive relationships with their work and organization (3). Similarly, psychological well-being has been identified as a mediating psychological mechanism through which personal resources, such as mental toughness, contribute to organizational commitment and job satisfaction (4). Research on teachers has also shown that mental well-being is embedded within a network of psychosocial and organizational factors and may be partly explained through employees' evaluations of their jobs, particularly job satisfaction (5). These findings collectively suggest that psychological well-being is not merely an individual health outcome but an organizationally relevant resource that can influence employees' attitudes, motivation, and behavioral engagement.

The organizational importance of psychological well-being is further reinforced by research demonstrating that positive psychological conditions can contribute to sustainable employability and work engagement. Employees who perceive themselves as psychologically healthy and capable of maintaining positive psychological functioning may be better prepared to remain actively engaged with their occupational roles and to sustain their employability over time (6). Psychological well-being may therefore be closely

related to employees' willingness to invest effort, accept obligations, and respond constructively to organizational demands. Research conducted in different populations has also demonstrated that psychological well-being can be strengthened through psychological and counseling interventions, indicating that it is a dynamic and potentially improvable psychological resource rather than a fixed personal characteristic (7). Within management research, this dynamic quality is especially important because organizations may be able to create environments, leadership practices, and job structures that facilitate employee well-being and subsequently improve organizational behavior. Nevertheless, the effects of psychological well-being may not be equally direct across all organizational outcomes. Instead, employees may need to translate positive psychological functioning into stronger perceptions of competence, autonomy, meaning, and influence before such well-being produces observable work behaviors. This possibility highlights psychological empowerment as an important explanatory mechanism linking employees' internal psychological functioning with organizational outcomes.

Psychological empowerment is a motivational construct describing employees' active orientation toward their work and their perception that they possess meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact within their occupational roles. Empowered employees perceive their work as personally meaningful, believe that they have the necessary abilities to perform effectively, experience discretion in initiating and regulating work activities, and believe that their actions can influence organizational outcomes. A substantial body of research has demonstrated that psychological empowerment is associated with favorable employee and organizational outcomes. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that psychological empowerment has a broad range of antecedents and is significantly related to important outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, innovative behavior, and reduced withdrawal-related responses (8). Similarly, psychological empowerment has been associated with improved employee performance, while psychological ownership has been identified as a mechanism through which empowered employees may become more invested in their roles and organizational outcomes (9). Recent research has also emphasized the role of psychological empowerment within contemporary human resource systems, suggesting that high-performance practices and responsible leadership may generate stronger employee outcomes when they enhance employees' sense of psychological empowerment (10). Thus, psychological empowerment appears to function as a central motivational resource through which organizational practices and personal psychological resources are converted into responsible and performance-oriented work behaviors.

The mediating role of psychological empowerment has been demonstrated across a variety of organizational relationships. For instance, psychological empowerment has been shown to mediate the effects of leadership styles on employee task performance, indicating that leadership may influence performance partly by increasing employees' perceptions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (11). Psychological empowerment has likewise been identified as a mediator between psychological capital and employee well-being, suggesting a reciprocal conceptual relationship in which positive psychological resources may contribute to empowerment and empowerment may subsequently enhance well-being (12). Related evidence indicates that empowerment can mediate the association between organizational conditions and employee well-being, further illustrating its role as a bridge between the work environment and positive psychological functioning (13). More recent findings also suggest that psychological empowerment and psychological well-being can operate as mediating mechanisms in

explaining job performance, emphasizing the interconnectedness of positive psychological functioning, empowerment, and work-related outcomes (14). In addition, psychological empowerment has been associated with occupational fit and organizational intimacy, suggesting that empowered employees may experience stronger psychological integration with their work and organization (15). Taken together, these findings support the assumption that psychological empowerment may provide a mechanism through which dimensions of psychological well-being contribute to stronger work responsibility.

Work responsibility represents an employee's willingness to recognize, accept, and fulfill obligations associated with organizational roles and to remain accountable for the consequences of work-related actions. Responsibility is closely related to conscientious work behavior, ethical conduct, adherence to organizational expectations, and concern for both individual and collective outcomes. In organizational settings, employees who demonstrate stronger responsibility are more likely to fulfill duties consistently, comply with professional and organizational standards, contribute to organizational goals, and accept accountability for decisions and performance. Research in Iranian organizational environments has shown that organizational socialization and social capital can contribute to employees' responsibility and that work ethics may play an important mediating role in this relationship (16). This finding is particularly relevant because it indicates that responsibility is shaped not only by formal job descriptions but also by psychological, social, and ethical processes within the organization. Furthermore, research has linked work ethic and job responsibility with achievement motivation, demonstrating that responsibility is associated with employees' motivational orientation toward accomplishing work objectives (17). At the same time, job responsibility can also function as a demanding psychological experience. High-performance work systems may increase employees' perceptions of job responsibility and, under certain circumstances, contribute to role overload and work fatigue (18). Therefore, greater responsibility should not simply be interpreted as an increase in workload; rather, effective responsibility involves employees' internal acceptance of organizational obligations accompanied by sufficient psychological resources to manage those obligations constructively.

Psychological empowerment may be particularly important for understanding how responsibility develops without becoming psychologically burdensome. When employees experience responsibility without autonomy, perceived competence, meaning, or influence, increased expectations may be experienced primarily as pressure or role overload. In contrast, when responsibility is accompanied by empowerment, employees may interpret obligations as meaningful opportunities for contribution, decision-making, and professional development. Studies of responsible leadership provide support for this proposition. Responsible leadership has been associated with psychological empowerment and workforce agility, illustrating that employees who feel empowered may be more capable of responding quickly and effectively to changing organizational requirements (19). Similarly, psychological empowerment has been shown to play a pivotal role in explaining the relationship between psychological capital and individual social responsibility, suggesting that empowerment may transform positive psychological resources into stronger responsible behavior within sustainable workplaces (20). These findings provide a theoretical basis for proposing that psychological well-being may contribute to work responsibility indirectly through psychological empowerment. Employees with greater self-acceptance, personal growth, positive interpersonal relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose in life may be better positioned

to develop feelings of competence, meaning, self-determination, and impact, which can subsequently promote stronger responsibility toward organizational duties.

However, the relationships among psychological well-being, empowerment, and responsibility may be influenced by maladaptive personality and cognitive tendencies. Negative perfectionism is particularly relevant in this regard. Perfectionism is a multidimensional construct and may have both adaptive and maladaptive forms. Whereas adaptive or positive perfectionism may involve high personal standards combined with flexible self-evaluation, negative perfectionism is characterized by excessive concern over mistakes, harsh self-criticism, fear of failure, rigid standards, and dissatisfaction with performance even when objective outcomes are satisfactory. Earlier research in Iran demonstrated associations among perfectionism, social psychological functioning, and developmental or interpersonal factors, indicating that perfectionistic tendencies may be embedded in broader psychological processes affecting individual adjustment (21). More recent organizational research has demonstrated that perfectionism is meaningfully related to employee strain, perseverance, and well-being, suggesting that perfectionistic tendencies can influence how employees experience workplace demands and evaluate their own performance (22). These findings are particularly important in private organizations, where competitive pressures and expectations of continuous performance may activate perfectionistic concerns and amplify employees' fear of inadequate performance.

Negative perfectionism may also interfere with organizational judgment and decision-making. Research among corporate human resource managers has shown that negative perfectionism is relevant to the relationship between critical thinking and cognitive biases such as the halo effect, indicating that maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies may shape how managers process information and make judgments (23). Such findings suggest that negative perfectionism may affect not only employee well-being but also the cognitive processes through which individuals interpret responsibility, competence, and organizational expectations. Employees high in negative perfectionism may perceive responsibility as a potential source of failure rather than an opportunity for meaningful contribution. They may also discount their own competence, focus excessively on errors, and experience greater psychological strain when confronted with demanding organizational expectations. As a consequence, the beneficial effect of psychological well-being on work responsibility may be weaker among employees with elevated negative perfectionism. Even employees who possess relatively strong psychological resources may fail to translate these resources into responsible organizational behavior when rigid self-evaluative standards and fear of mistakes undermine psychological empowerment.

The possibility that perfectionism may have both constructive and destructive consequences further emphasizes the need to examine its moderating role. Recent evidence indicates that perfectionism in leadership can operate as a double-edged sword, producing different effects on employee job performance depending on employees' psychological resources, such as self-efficacy (24). This reinforces the view that perfectionistic standards cannot be understood independently of the psychological context in which they operate. Although demanding standards may sometimes encourage greater effort, maladaptive or negative perfectionism may increase strain, fear of evaluation, avoidance, and dissatisfaction, thereby reducing the likelihood that employees will respond constructively to organizational responsibility. Psychological empowerment may partially protect employees from these tendencies by strengthening perceived

competence and influence; however, high levels of negative perfectionism may also weaken the positive psychological processes through which well-being contributes to responsibility. Accordingly, examining negative perfectionism as a moderator provides an opportunity to clarify why psychologically healthy and empowered employees may still differ in their levels of work responsibility.

Despite the growing literature on psychological well-being, psychological empowerment, employee performance, and organizational outcomes, several important gaps remain. First, previous studies have frequently examined psychological well-being in relation to job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, employability, or performance (3, 4, 6), whereas considerably less attention has been given to work responsibility as a distinct behavioral and ethical organizational outcome. Second, psychological empowerment has commonly been examined as an outcome of leadership, human resource practices, psychological capital, occupational fit, or organizational conditions (10, 11, 15, 19), but its role in translating specific dimensions of psychological well-being into greater work responsibility remains insufficiently understood. Third, research suggests that empowerment, well-being, responsibility, and performance are closely interconnected (12-14, 20), yet these relationships have rarely been integrated into a single moderated mediation model. Fourth, although negative perfectionism has been studied in relation to well-being, strain, cognitive processes, and work performance (22-24), its potential role in altering the association between psychological well-being and work responsibility has received limited empirical attention. Finally, organizational context remains important. Given documented differences in employee motivation across organizational types (1), findings derived from public-sector, educational, healthcare, or other occupational populations cannot automatically be generalized to employees in private organizations.

These gaps are particularly relevant in the Iranian private-sector context. Iranian organizational studies have highlighted the importance of organizational culture, socialization, social capital, commitment, ethics, and responsibility for employee functioning (2, 16), yet relatively limited evidence has integrated positive psychological functioning with employees' perceived empowerment and responsibility. Private organizations in Iran operate under economic, competitive, technological, and human resource pressures that may make employee responsibility especially consequential for organizational continuity and effectiveness. Under such conditions, employees may be required not only to complete assigned duties but also to exercise initiative, respond flexibly to uncertainty, accept accountability, and maintain psychological functioning despite demanding performance expectations. Understanding whether different dimensions of psychological well-being contribute equally to these responsible behaviors is therefore theoretically and practically important. It is also important to determine whether psychological empowerment explains these effects, because identifying a modifiable organizational mechanism can provide managers with more actionable knowledge than demonstrating direct associations alone. Moreover, assessing negative perfectionism as a moderating factor can clarify whether maladaptive personal standards weaken the translation of positive psychological functioning into responsible work behavior.

Accordingly, the aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of psychological well-being on work responsibility through the mediating role of psychological empowerment among employees of private organizations in Iran and to examine the moderating role of negative perfectionism in these relationships.

Methods and Materials

Study Design and Participants

The present study employed a descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional research design, and structural equation modeling was used to examine the relationships among the study variables. Psychological well-being was considered the independent variable, work responsibility was considered the dependent variable, psychological empowerment was considered the mediating variable, and negative perfectionism was considered the moderating variable. The statistical population comprised all employees working in private organizations in Iran and residing in Tehran between July and November 2024. The study sample consisted of 192 employees who were selected using stratified random sampling. The adequacy of the sample size was determined based on Cohen's formula for estimating the required sample size for structural equation modeling, considering the number of observed and latent variables in the model, the anticipated effect size, the desired probability level, and statistical power (Cohen, 2013). Based on this formula, the anticipated effect size was set at .30, the desired statistical power level at .80, the number of latent variables at 9, the number of observed variables at 136, and the probability level at .05. Based on these parameters, the required sample size was estimated to be 184 participants. To compensate for possible attrition, the researcher initially recruited 200 participants. The inclusion criteria were having been employed in the organization for at least one year, providing informed consent to participate in the study, and possessing adequate literacy and comprehension skills to respond to the questionnaire items. The exclusion criteria included being younger than 20 years of age, having any physical or psychological condition that prevented adequate questionnaire completion, and failing to respond to more than eight questionnaire items, which resulted in exclusion from the study.

The research procedure was as follows. Initially, the required authorization to conduct the study was obtained from the researcher's university. Subsequently, with the assistance of university faculty members, the researcher was introduced to four private organizations located in Tehran; the names of the organizations were kept confidential to protect organizational information. These organizations were selected because of the feasibility of coordinating and conducting the study and their willingness to cooperate. The researcher then visited the organizations and coordinated the implementation of the study with their management. Based on the separate organizational units within each organization, employees were classified into strata, and a list of employees from each organization was obtained. Participants were then randomly selected from each stratum using a random-number table. Subsequently, an electronic message was sent to the selected employees providing preliminary information about the study. The information included the objectives of the research, research authorization, and provisions concerning compliance with ethical principles. Employees were assured that none of the research forms contained personally identifiable information and that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they no longer wished to participate. Because of limitations in obtaining the cooperation of all employees, the research implementation and online questionnaire completion process extended over a period of four months. Ultimately, 192 of the 200 completed questionnaires were included in the analyses. Eight questionnaires were excluded because they were incomplete or contained indications of deliberate response errors. Psychological well-being, psychological empowerment, work responsibility, and negative perfectionism were

assessed online using self-report measures. All ethical principles were observed throughout the study, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

Data Collection Tools

The Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB) are self-report instruments originally developed by Ryff in 1980 to assess individuals' psychological well-being. The original long form contained 120 items, and shorter forms, including an 84-item version, were subsequently developed. The third version was developed by Carol Ryff at the University of Wisconsin in 1989 based on the original long form (Ryff, 1989). The 84-item questionnaire comprises six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth, and environmental mastery, with 14 items assigned to each dimension. The questionnaire is scored on a six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scores for each dimension ranged from 14 to 86. Researchers in Iran reported internal consistency coefficients ranging from .76 to .83 for the dimensions of the scale [21]. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .728 for self-acceptance, .687 for positive relations with others, .766 for autonomy, .723 for purpose in life, .881 for personal growth, and .859 for environmental mastery.

The Psychological Empowerment Scale was developed by Spreitzer (1995) to assess individuals' psychological empowerment. The questionnaire consists of 12 items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). It comprises four dimensions: meaning (Items 1, 6, and 11), competence (Items 2, 5, and 7), impact (Items 4, 9, and 12), and self-determination (Items 3, 8, and 10). Item scores are summed to obtain a total psychological empowerment score. Scores between 12 and 20 indicate a low level of psychological empowerment, scores between 20 and 40 indicate a moderate level, and scores above 40 indicate a high level of psychological empowerment. Iranian researchers reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .88 for the scale [23]. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was .811.

The Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale (PANPS) is a self-report measure developed by Terry-Short et al. (1995) to assess perfectionism across two dimensions: positive perfectionism and negative perfectionism. The instrument consists of 40 items, for each of which participants select one of five response options representing the intensity of the relevant characteristic. Twenty items assess positive perfectionism and 20 items assess negative perfectionism. Only the negative perfectionism dimension was used in the present study. Responses are scored on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5. Scores for the 20 negative perfectionism items are summed, yielding total scores ranging from 20 to 100. Higher scores indicate higher levels of negative perfectionism. In an Iranian study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was reported to be .83 [25]. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for the negative perfectionism dimension was .884, and its composite reliability was .810. The average variance extracted (AVE), as an indicator of convergent validity, was .50.

The Organizational Responsibility Questionnaire is a self-report instrument developed by Carroll in 1991 to assess work-related and social responsibility among individuals in organizational settings (Carroll, 1991). The questionnaire consists of 20 items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It assesses the dimensions of economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, and social responsibility. Total scores range from 20 to 100, with higher scores

indicating higher levels of responsibility. In an Iranian study, Cronbach's alpha for this instrument was reported to be .92, and confirmatory factor analysis was used to establish its validity [27]. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .789, and composite reliability was .785. The AVE value for convergent validity was .53.

Data Analysis

SPSS version 27 was used to calculate descriptive statistics, whereas SmartPLS version 4 was employed to analyze the structural paths among the study variables. The Sobel test was also used to evaluate the statistical significance of the mediating variable. The Shapiro–Wilk test was used to examine the normality of the distributions of the study variables. Because the Shapiro–Wilk test was statistically significant for the study variables, the distributions were considered non-normal. Therefore, SmartPLS and the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach were used. The significance level was set at .05.

Findings and Results

The researcher first examined the descriptive characteristics of the participants. In terms of age, employees were categorized into three groups: 20–30 years (56.3%), 30–40 years (25.5%), and 40 years and older (18.2%). In terms of gender, employees were divided into two groups: male (60.4%) and female (39.6%). Regarding educational attainment, employees were classified into three groups: diploma (7.8%), bachelor's degree (68.8%), and master's degree (23.4%).

Table 1. Description of the Demographic Variables

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percent	Sample Size	Median
Gender	Male	116	60.4	192	1
	Female	76	39.6		
Age	20–30	108	56.3	192	1
	30–40	49	25.5		
	≥40	35	18.2		
Education	Diploma	15	7.8	192	3
	Bachelor's degree	132	68.8		
	Master's degree	45	23.4		

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, skewness, kurtosis, and normality statistics for the main study variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Main Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Max	Min	N	Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro–Wilk	p
Responsibility	62.615	6.179	75	51	192	−0.254	−0.761	0.954	< .001
Self-acceptance	48.063	7.468	65	34	192	−0.399	−0.866	0.909	< .001
Positive relations with others	48.349	6.866	60	31	192	−0.626	−0.684	0.894	< .001
Autonomy	47.469	7.005	58	34	192	−0.686	−1.063	0.831	< .001
Purpose in life	49.510	5.682	58	34	192	−1.116	0.377	0.832	< .001
Personal growth	48.365	6.026	58	34	192	−0.763	−0.516	0.868	< .001
Environmental mastery	48.766	5.941	58	34	192	−0.830	−0.339	0.862	< .001
Empowerment	30.708	5.276	39	19	192	−0.577	−0.663	0.933	< .001
Negative perfectionism	63.010	6.050	78	51	192	0.363	−0.415	0.973	< .001

Table 3 presents the correlations among the study variables based on Pearson's correlation coefficients.

Table 3. Pearson Correlations Among the Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Responsibility	—								
2. Self-acceptance	.510***	—							
3. Positive relations with others	.518***	.726***	—						
4. Autonomy	.246***	.080	.225**	—					
5. Purpose in life	.408***	.306***	.343***	.468***	—				
6. Personal growth	.404***	.063	.104	.299***	.495***	—			
7. Environmental mastery	.246***	.179*	.170*	.237***	.465***	.529***	—		
8. Empowerment	.753***	.342***	.371***	.249***	.348***	.376***	.219**	—	
9. Negative perfectionism	−.757***	−.418***	−.434***	−.222**	−.392***	−.388***	−.269***	−.654***	—

According to Table 3, responsibility was positively and significantly correlated with self-acceptance (r = .510, p < .001), positive relations with others (r = .518, p < .001), autonomy (r = .246, p < .001), purpose in life (r = .408, p < .001), personal growth (r = .404, p < .001), environmental mastery (r = .246, p < .001), and empowerment (r = .753, p < .001). Similarly, responsibility was negatively and significantly correlated with negative perfectionism (r = −.757, p < .001). Negative perfectionism was also negatively and significantly correlated with self-acceptance (r = −.418, p < .001), positive relations with others (r = −.434, p < .001), autonomy (r = −.222, p < .01), purpose in life (r = −.392, p < .001), personal growth (r = −.388, p < .001), environmental mastery (r = −.269, p < .001), and empowerment (r = −.654, p < .001). The path coefficients and statistical significance of the relationships among the study variables are presented in Table 4. Bootstrapping was performed using 5,000 resamples.

Table 4. Standardized Path Coefficients for the Structural Model

Hypothesis Result	t	p	SD	Path Coefficient (β)	Path
Rejected	1.257	.209	.066	.083	Autonomy → Empowerment
Rejected	0.794	.428	.056	.044	Autonomy → Responsibility
Supported	5.798	< .001	.066	.383	Empowerment → Responsibility
Rejected	0.821	.412	.077	−.063	Environmental mastery → Empowerment
Rejected	0.368	.713	.051	−.019	Environmental mastery → Responsibility
Supported	5.232	< .001	.061	−.317	Negative perfectionism → Responsibility
Rejected	0.798	.425	.078	.062	Purpose in life → Empowerment
Rejected	0.367	.713	.069	−.025	Purpose in life → Responsibility
Supported	3.544	< .001	.091	.324	Personal growth → Empowerment
Supported	2.954	.003	.053	.155	Personal growth → Responsibility
Supported	2.288	.022	.079	.180	Positive relations with others → Empowerment
Supported	2.291	.022	.058	.133	Positive relations with others → Responsibility
Supported	2.480	.013	.071	.176	Self-acceptance → Empowerment
Supported	3.138	.002	.055	.171	Self-acceptance → Responsibility
Moderating Effects					
Rejected	0.504	.614	.041	.021	Negative perfectionism × Environmental mastery → Responsibility
Rejected	0.108	.914	.044	.005	Negative perfectionism × Personal growth → Responsibility
Rejected	1.139	.255	.079	−.090	Negative perfectionism × Purpose in life → Responsibility
Rejected	1.013	.311	.072	.072	Negative perfectionism × Autonomy → Responsibility
Rejected	1.773	.076	.077	−.136	Negative perfectionism × Positive relations with others → Responsibility
Rejected	0.294	.769	.078	.023	Negative perfectionism × Self-acceptance → Responsibility
Indirect Effects					

Rejected	1.209	.227	.026	.032	Autonomy → Empowerment → Responsibility
Supported	3.055	.002	.041	.124	Personal growth → Empowerment → Responsibility
Supported	2.198	.028	.031	.067	Self-acceptance → Empowerment → Responsibility
Rejected	0.796	.426	.030	−.024	Environmental mastery → Empowerment → Responsibility
Rejected	0.802	.423	.030	.024	Purpose in life → Empowerment → Responsibility
Supported	2.085	.037	.033	.069	Positive relations with others → Empowerment → Responsibility

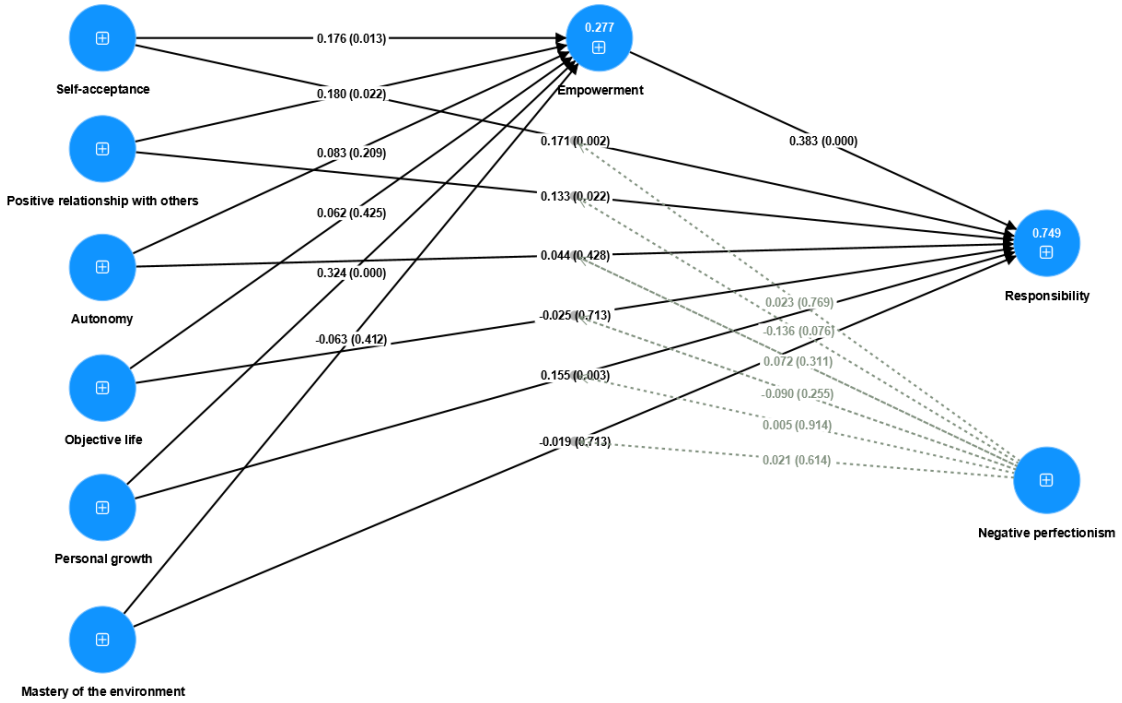


Figure 1. Path coefficients among the study variables and their significance levels.

Based on the findings presented in Table 4 and Figure 1, autonomy did not have a statistically significant effect on either empowerment or responsibility (p > .05). Personal growth had a positive and significant effect on empowerment (β = .324, p < .001) and responsibility (β = .155, p = .003). Positive relations with others also had a positive and significant effect on empowerment (β = .180, p = .022) and responsibility (β = .133, p = .022). Environmental mastery did not have a statistically significant effect on either empowerment or responsibility (p > .05). Self-acceptance had a positive and significant effect on empowerment (β = .176, p = .013) and responsibility (β = .171, p = .002). Similarly, purpose in life did not have a statistically significant effect on empowerment or responsibility (p > .05). Empowerment had a direct, positive, and significant effect on responsibility (β = .383, p < .001). Negative perfectionism also had a negative and significant effect on responsibility (β = −.317, p < .001). The moderating effects of negative perfectionism were subsequently examined within the structural model. According to the findings, negative perfectionism did not significantly moderate any of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable (p > .05). Personal growth had a positive and significant indirect effect on responsibility through empowerment as a mediating variable (β = .124, p = .002). Self-acceptance also had a positive and significant indirect effect on responsibility through empowerment (β = .067, p = .028). Similarly, positive relations with others had a positive and significant indirect effect on responsibility through empowerment (β = .069, p = .037). However, empowerment did not significantly mediate the

relationships of autonomy, environmental mastery, or purpose in life with responsibility ($p > .05$). The Sobel test was also used to examine the statistical significance of the mediating effects.

Table 5. Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Responsibility	.789	.785	.53
Self-acceptance	.728	.725	.52
Positive relations with others	.687	.686	.58
Autonomy	.766	.836	.78
Purpose in life	.723	.828	.64
Personal growth	.881	.901	.55
Environmental mastery	.859	.892	.54
Empowerment	.811	.869	.57
Negative perfectionism	.884	.810	.50

According to Table 5, the reliability and validity of the model were supported. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the variables were generally above .70. Composite reliability coefficients were also generally above .70. Similarly, the validity of the measurement model was assessed using the AVE criterion. Because the AVE values for the study variables were .50 or higher, convergent validity was considered acceptable. The researcher also evaluated the overall model fit. The model-fit indices supported an acceptable fit of the model. The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) represents the standardized difference between the observed correlation matrix and the correlation matrix implied by the structural model. The SRMR value for the model was .059, while the normed fit index (NFI) was .920. The researcher also examined the coefficients of determination for the endogenous variables included in the study.

Table 6. Coefficients of Determination for the Structural Model

Variable	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Empowerment	.277	.254
Responsibility	.749	.730

The researcher also used the blindfolding procedure to evaluate the model's predictive relevance for the study variables. Q^2 values greater than zero indicate that the model has predictive relevance and is capable of reconstructing the observed data with acceptable accuracy. As shown in Table 7, the obtained Q^2 values supported the predictive relevance of the model.

Table 7. Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Variable	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (= 1 – SSE/SSO)
Empowerment	192.000	143.227	.254
Responsibility	192.000	55.941	.709

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study investigated the effect of psychological well-being on work responsibility through the mediating role of psychological empowerment among employees of private organizations in Iran, while also examining the moderating role of negative perfectionism. The findings showed that the dimensions of psychological well-being did not operate uniformly in predicting work responsibility. Personal growth, positive relations with others, and self-acceptance had significant positive direct effects on work responsibility and also exerted significant indirect effects through psychological empowerment. In contrast, autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose in life did not significantly predict psychological

empowerment or work responsibility in the structural model. Psychological empowerment itself had a strong positive and significant direct effect on work responsibility, whereas negative perfectionism had a significant negative direct effect on work responsibility. However, negative perfectionism did not significantly moderate the relationships between the dimensions of psychological well-being and work responsibility. These findings suggest that psychological well-being contributes to work responsibility primarily through selected interpersonal and self-developmental dimensions and that psychological empowerment is a central mechanism through which these dimensions are translated into responsible work behavior.

One of the most important findings was the strong positive effect of psychological empowerment on work responsibility. This result is consistent with research showing that psychologically empowered employees are more likely to display constructive work behaviors, improved performance, stronger organizational involvement, and a greater sense of ownership over their work. Meta-analytic evidence has demonstrated that psychological empowerment is associated with a broad range of desirable organizational outcomes, including performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, innovative behavior, and reduced withdrawal tendencies (8). Similarly, the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between leadership and task performance suggests that employees perform more effectively when they perceive their work as meaningful, feel competent, experience self-determination, and believe that they can influence organizational outcomes (11). The present findings extend this perspective by indicating that psychological empowerment is also directly associated with stronger work responsibility. Employees who perceive themselves as capable and influential within their jobs may be more willing to accept accountability, act proactively, and regard organizational duties as personally meaningful rather than externally imposed obligations.

The positive role of psychological empowerment is also aligned with studies emphasizing its importance in responsible and adaptive organizational behavior. Research has shown that responsible leadership contributes to workforce agility through psychological empowerment, indicating that empowerment helps employees respond flexibly and responsibly to changing organizational demands (19). Likewise, psychological empowerment has been identified as a pivotal mechanism linking psychological capital with individual social responsibility in the workplace (20). These findings support the interpretation that empowerment transforms internal psychological resources into observable responsible behavior. When employees believe that their work has meaning and that they possess competence and decision latitude, they may be more likely to perceive responsibility as an opportunity to contribute rather than merely as an external requirement. The finding is also consistent with evidence indicating that empowerment can improve performance through stronger psychological ownership, because employees who experience a stronger sense of ownership over their roles are more inclined to protect organizational interests and assume responsibility for outcomes (9).

The significant indirect effect of personal growth on work responsibility through psychological empowerment represents another important finding. Personal growth reflects an individual's perception of continued development, openness to new experiences, and willingness to realize personal potential. Employees who perceive themselves as continually developing may be more receptive to learning, more confident in dealing with new tasks, and more motivated to expand their occupational capabilities. Such characteristics can strengthen psychological empowerment by enhancing perceptions of competence and

meaning. The current finding is compatible with research linking psychological well-being and empowerment to favorable work outcomes. Psychological well-being has been associated with organizational commitment and job satisfaction, suggesting that employees with stronger positive psychological functioning are more likely to establish a constructive relationship with their work (3). Similarly, psychological well-being has been shown to mediate relationships between personal psychological resources and important organizational outcomes such as commitment and job satisfaction (4). From this perspective, personal growth may foster an internal readiness for development, while psychological empowerment provides the motivational mechanism through which this readiness becomes translated into responsible organizational conduct.

The finding concerning personal growth can also be interpreted in light of research on sustainable employability and engagement. Employees with higher psychological well-being and empowerment have been found to demonstrate stronger work engagement and greater sustainable employability (6). Personal growth may therefore represent a particularly relevant dimension of well-being in dynamic private organizations, where employees are often required to update their knowledge, acquire new skills, and adapt to rapidly changing job demands. When personal development is accompanied by psychological empowerment, employees may experience greater confidence in their capacity to act effectively and take responsibility for work outcomes. The significant direct effect of personal growth on responsibility in the present study further suggests that developmental orientation may independently support responsible behavior, beyond its indirect effect through empowerment. This is also consistent with broader evidence showing that positive psychological conditions can be improved and that enhanced well-being can support adaptive functioning (7).

Positive relations with others also had significant positive direct and indirect effects on work responsibility. This result indicates that employees who experience warm, trusting, and constructive relationships with others may be more likely to feel empowered and to demonstrate greater responsibility in their occupational roles. The finding is theoretically plausible because organizational responsibility is rarely exercised in isolation. Employees perform their duties within networks of supervisors, colleagues, customers, and other stakeholders, and positive interpersonal relationships can increase cooperation, mutual trust, information exchange, and perceived social support. In Iranian organizational settings, organizational socialization and social capital have been shown to predict responsibility, with work ethics acting as an important explanatory mechanism (16). This is closely aligned with the current result because positive relations with others may reflect an interpersonal resource that strengthens social integration and the internalization of organizational expectations. Employees who experience stronger interpersonal connectedness may be more willing to consider the consequences of their behavior for colleagues and the organization, thereby increasing their sense of responsibility.

Positive interpersonal functioning may also strengthen psychological empowerment by increasing employees' access to support, feedback, and organizational resources. Empowerment is not purely an internal characteristic; it is influenced by the social and organizational environment. Research showing that empowerment mediates relationships between psychological capital and employee well-being supports the idea that social and psychological resources can reinforce empowered functioning (12). Likewise, evidence that empowerment mediates the relationship between workplace conditions and employee well-being

suggests that employees interpret organizational and interpersonal experiences through perceptions of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact (13). Accordingly, employees who maintain positive relationships with others may receive greater encouragement and validation, which can strengthen feelings of competence and influence and subsequently promote greater responsibility.

Self-acceptance was another dimension that had both a significant direct effect on responsibility and a significant indirect effect through psychological empowerment. Self-acceptance refers to a positive evaluation of oneself, including recognition and acceptance of one's strengths and limitations. Employees with higher self-acceptance may be more psychologically secure, less defensive in response to mistakes, and more capable of realistically evaluating their own performance. These qualities may contribute to greater responsibility because accountable behavior often requires employees to acknowledge errors, accept consequences, and take corrective action. Self-acceptance may also strengthen empowerment by increasing confidence and reducing excessive dependence on external evaluation. This interpretation is consistent with studies emphasizing psychological empowerment as a mediator between psychological resources and organizational outcomes (12, 14). Employees who possess a stable and accepting view of themselves may be better able to convert psychological well-being into feelings of competence and personal influence, thereby becoming more responsible in their work.

In contrast, autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose in life did not show significant direct or indirect effects on responsibility in the structural model. These findings do not necessarily imply that these dimensions are unimportant; rather, they suggest that their effects may be more context-dependent or may overlap with other psychological resources in the model. Autonomy, for example, may not automatically lead to greater responsibility when organizational structures restrict decision-making authority or when employees have limited opportunities to exercise discretion. Research comparing private, public, and hybrid organizations has shown that motivational dynamics vary across organizational contexts (1). Therefore, the extent to which autonomy contributes to work responsibility may depend on actual job design, managerial practices, and organizational culture. Likewise, environmental mastery may be more strongly related to coping and adaptation than to responsibility itself, while purpose in life may be broader than occupational purpose and may not directly translate into organizational behavior unless employees perceive alignment between personal goals and work roles.

The non-significant effects of some well-being dimensions can also be understood by considering that responsibility is shaped by multiple organizational and motivational processes. Work responsibility has been associated with achievement motivation and work ethic, and its effects may depend on the surrounding work environment (17). In addition, job responsibility can become burdensome when accompanied by role overload, as shown in research on high-performance work systems and work fatigue (18). Thus, employees may possess autonomy, purpose, or environmental mastery without necessarily displaying greater responsibility if the organizational context does not provide adequate support or if responsibilities are experienced primarily as additional demands. This may be especially relevant in private-sector organizations where job demands, performance expectations, and workload pressures can be substantial.

Another major finding was the significant negative direct effect of negative perfectionism on work responsibility. Employees with higher levels of negative perfectionism reported lower responsibility, even after considering the effects of psychological well-being and empowerment. This finding is consistent with

research showing that maladaptive perfectionism is associated with strain, lower well-being, and problematic psychological functioning in employees (22). Negative perfectionism is characterized by excessive concern about mistakes, rigid standards, self-criticism, and dissatisfaction with one's performance. These characteristics may undermine responsibility because employees may become excessively focused on avoiding failure rather than constructively engaging with their tasks. They may also delay decisions, avoid taking ownership of uncertain outcomes, or respond defensively to errors because accepting responsibility could threaten their self-evaluation.

The negative relationship between perfectionism and responsibility is also consistent with evidence demonstrating that negative perfectionism can affect cognitive and managerial processes. Research among managers has shown that negative perfectionism is relevant to the relationship between critical thinking and cognitive bias, suggesting that maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies may influence judgment and information processing (23). Earlier Iranian research also linked perfectionism with broader psychosocial functioning, reinforcing the view that maladaptive perfectionism may interfere with healthy adjustment (21). In organizational contexts, employees high in negative perfectionism may be preoccupied with achieving flawless outcomes, which can paradoxically reduce flexibility, initiative, and willingness to accept uncertain responsibilities. The finding is also compatible with recent evidence describing perfectionism as a double-edged phenomenon whose consequences depend on psychological resources and individual conditions (24).

Despite its significant direct association with responsibility, negative perfectionism did not significantly moderate the effects of any psychological well-being dimension on responsibility. This suggests that negative perfectionism operates more as an independent detrimental factor than as a condition that systematically changes the strength of the relationship between well-being and responsibility. In other words, employees with higher negative perfectionism may generally demonstrate lower responsibility, but the positive effects of self-acceptance, personal growth, and positive relations with others do not appear to depend substantially on the level of negative perfectionism. One possible explanation is that the beneficial effects of these dimensions of well-being and psychological empowerment are relatively robust. Another possibility is that perfectionism exerts its influence through mechanisms not directly modeled in this study, such as anxiety, fear of failure, cognitive rigidity, or avoidance. This interpretation is compatible with research showing that the consequences of perfectionism can depend on other psychological moderators such as self-efficacy (24).

Overall, the findings provide support for a differentiated model of psychological well-being in organizational behavior. Psychological well-being should not be treated as a single undifferentiated resource when predicting work responsibility. Rather, the findings suggest that self-acceptance, personal growth, and positive relations with others are particularly important because they contribute directly to responsibility and indirectly through psychological empowerment. The central role of empowerment is consistent with evidence that it links positive psychological resources, leadership practices, occupational fit, and high-performance human resource practices to favorable work outcomes (10, 11, 15). The strong explanatory power of the structural model for responsibility also suggests that psychological empowerment and negative perfectionism represent important complementary mechanisms: empowerment appears to facilitate responsible behavior, whereas negative perfectionism constrains it. These findings contribute to the literature by integrating psychological well-being, empowerment, responsibility, and perfectionism within a

single model and by demonstrating that their relationships are more selective and complex than a simple direct association between employee well-being and responsibility.

A number of limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study used a cross-sectional design, which does not permit definitive causal conclusions regarding the relationships among psychological well-being, psychological empowerment, negative perfectionism, and work responsibility. Second, all variables were measured using self-report questionnaires, which may have increased the possibility of common-method variance, social desirability bias, and response tendencies. Third, the participants were employees of only four private organizations in Tehran, and although stratified random sampling was used within these organizations, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all private-sector employees in Iran or to employees in public, nonprofit, or international organizations. Fourth, the final sample size, although adequate for the specified structural model, was relatively modest and may have reduced statistical power for detecting small interaction effects, particularly the moderating effects of negative perfectionism. Fifth, the study did not examine potentially influential organizational variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, job autonomy, workload, perceived organizational support, occupational level, or organizational tenure. Finally, the relatively low internal consistency observed for some dimensions should be considered when interpreting the corresponding relationships.

Future studies should employ longitudinal and prospective designs to clarify the temporal ordering of psychological well-being, empowerment, perfectionism, and work responsibility and to determine whether changes in well-being lead to subsequent changes in responsibility. Experimental and intervention-based studies could also examine whether empowerment-oriented interventions improve responsibility among employees and whether reductions in maladaptive perfectionism strengthen these effects. Future research should include larger and more heterogeneous samples drawn from multiple cities, industries, organizational sizes, and employment sectors to improve generalizability. Multilevel models could investigate whether organizational characteristics, leadership practices, and team climate influence the relationships identified in the present study. It would also be valuable to examine additional mediators, including work engagement, psychological ownership, self-efficacy, organizational commitment, and perceived meaningfulness of work. Future research may further distinguish between positive and negative perfectionism and examine whether adaptive perfectionistic striving has different consequences from maladaptive evaluative concerns. Finally, incorporating supervisor ratings, objective performance indicators, peer evaluations, and behavioral measures of responsibility would reduce reliance on self-report data and provide stronger evidence concerning employee behavior.

From a practical perspective, private organizations should place greater emphasis on creating work environments that strengthen psychological empowerment, particularly employees' perceptions of competence, meaning, self-determination, and impact. Managers can support empowerment by delegating meaningful responsibilities, involving employees in decisions, providing constructive performance feedback, clarifying the significance of employees' contributions, and offering opportunities for professional development. Human resource programs should also promote personal growth, healthy self-acceptance, and constructive interpersonal relationships through training, mentoring, coaching, team-development activities, and supportive leadership practices. Because negative perfectionism was associated with lower responsibility, organizations should avoid management practices that create unrealistic standards, excessive

fear of mistakes, or punitive responses to failure. Instead, managers should foster a learning-oriented climate in which errors can be discussed constructively and employees can assume responsibility without excessive fear of negative evaluation. Screening for excessive perfectionistic tendencies should not be used as a basis for exclusion; rather, organizational support and developmental programs can help employees develop more flexible standards, realistic self-evaluation, and healthier approaches to performance and accountability.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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