

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Family-friendly human resource management and career sustainability: The role of reproductive well-being among female employees in China

DOI: 10.29063/ajrh2026/v30i9s.16

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Abstract

Although family-friendly human resource management practices are well-recognized for enhancing employee well-being and fostering sustainable careers, there is limited research on their direct connection to reproductive well-being and career sustainability, especially among women in China. This study aims to fill this research gap by exploring how such practices influence the reproductive well-being and long-term career prospects of women working across different sectors in China. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was adopted, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on validated scales from previous studies. A total of 342 responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and structural equation modeling. The results reveal that family-friendly HRM practices significantly improve reproductive well-being and positively influence career sustainability. Furthermore, reproductive well-being was found to contribute to long-term career stability among female employees. The findings suggest that organizations implementing supportive HR policies such as flexible working arrangements and parental support programs can enhance employee well-being and promote sustainable career development. The study provides practical implications for organizations seeking to develop inclusive and supportive workplace environments that facilitate both employee well-being and organizational sustainability. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2026; 30 [9s]: 167-176).

Keywords: Family-friendly HRM, reproductive well-being, career sustainability, work-family balance, female employees

Résumé

Bien que les pratiques de gestion des ressources humaines favorables à la famille soient bien reconnues pour améliorer le bien-être des employés et favoriser des carrières durables, la recherche sur leur lien direct avec le bien-être reproductif et la durabilité des carrières reste limitée, en particulier chez les femmes en Chine. Cette étude vise à combler cette lacune en explorant comment ces pratiques influencent le bien-être reproductif et les perspectives de carrière à long terme des femmes travaillant dans différents secteurs en Chine. Une méthodologie de recherche quantitative transversale a été adoptée, et les données ont été collectées à l'aide d'un questionnaire structuré basé sur des échelles validées issues d'études antérieures. Un total de 342 réponses a été analysé à l'aide de statistiques descriptives, d'analyses de fiabilité, d'analyses de corrélation et de modélisation par équations structurelles. Les résultats révèlent que les pratiques de GRH favorables à la famille améliorent significativement le bien-être reproductif et influencent positivement la durabilité des carrières. De plus, il a été constaté que le bien-être reproductif contribue à la stabilité professionnelle à long terme des employées féminines. Les résultats suggèrent que les organisations mettant en œuvre des politiques RH de soutien, telles que des modalités de travail flexibles et des programmes de soutien parental, peuvent améliorer le bien-être des employés et promouvoir un développement de carrière durable. L'étude fournit des implications pratiques pour les organisations cherchant à développer des environnements de travail inclusifs et favorables qui facilitent à la fois le bien-être des employés et la durabilité organisationnelle. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2026; 30 [9s]: 167-176).

Mots-clés: GRH favorable à la famille, bien-être reproductif, durabilité de carrière, équilibre travail-vie personnelle, employées féminines

Introduction

Family-friendly human resource management (HRM) practices have increasingly become an

important area of research in organizational studies, particularly in relation to employees' well-being and long-term career development. These practices include organizational policies and initiatives such

as flexible working arrangements, parental leave, childcare support, and work–life balance programs designed to help employees manage both professional and family responsibilities. Prior research suggests that organizations implementing family-supportive policies not only improve employee satisfaction and productivity but also enhance overall organizational sustainability^{1,2}. In recent years, the importance of such policies has become more evident as workplaces attempt to address gender disparities and support female employees in maintaining stable and sustainable careers.

For female employees, the intersection between work and family responsibilities is particularly significant due to reproductive roles and societal expectations surrounding caregiving. Women often experience higher levels of work–family conflict, which can negatively influence their psychological well-being, career advancement, and job continuity^{3,4}. Reproductive well-being, which encompasses physical, emotional, and psychological health related to reproductive life stages such as menstruation, pregnancy, and fertility concerns, remains an underexplored dimension in HRM research. Scholars have increasingly emphasized that workplace environments and organizational policies can significantly influence women's reproductive health experiences and their ability to maintain career progression^{5,6}.

In China, these issues have gained greater attention due to demographic changes, evolving labor market dynamics, and recent family policy reforms such as the transition from the one-child policy to the two-child and three-child policies. These policy shifts have placed additional expectations on women to balance professional responsibilities with reproductive and family roles. Studies indicate that inadequate organizational support for family and reproductive responsibilities may contribute to career interruptions, reduced job satisfaction, and declining fertility intentions among working women^{7,8}. Consequently, family-friendly HRM policies have become increasingly relevant in supporting female employees' reproductive well-being and sustaining their participation in the workforce.

Despite the growing literature on work–family balance and sustainable careers, limited research has specifically examined how family-friendly HRM practices influence reproductive well-being and long-term career sustainability

among female employees, particularly within the Chinese context. Understanding these relationships is important for organizations aiming to create inclusive and supportive work environments that promote both employee well-being and organizational performance. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of family-friendly HRM practices in shaping reproductive well-being and career sustainability among female employees in China, thereby contributing to the broader literature on sustainable careers and gender-responsive human resource management.

Literature review

Family-friendly human resource management (HRM) practices have emerged as a significant area of inquiry in organizational and management research due to their role in supporting employees' work–life balance and overall well-being. These practices include policies such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, childcare support, and supervisor support mechanisms that allow employees to effectively manage professional and family responsibilities. Scholars argue that family-supportive work environments enhance employee commitment, reduce work–family conflict, and improve job satisfaction and performance outcomes^{1,2}. Hammer *et al.*¹ developed the concept of family-supportive supervisor behaviors, demonstrating that managerial support for employees' family roles significantly improves employee well-being and workplace productivity¹. Similarly, Shockley and Allen highlighted that employees who perceive their organizations as supportive of family responsibilities are more likely to experience positive work attitudes and lower turnover intentions³.

A central issue in the literature is the relationship between family-friendly HRM practices and work–family balance. Work–family conflict arises when the demands of work and family roles become incompatible, leading to stress and reduced well-being among employees. Greenhaus and Beutell's foundational work on work–family conflict established that role pressures from work and family domains often compete for time and energy, particularly affecting women who frequently shoulder greater caregiving responsibilities³. Subsequent research has demonstrated that organizational support and flexible work arrangements can mitigate these

conflicts by enabling employees to better allocate their time and resources between professional and personal roles⁴. Studies have further shown that work–family balance initiatives not only benefit employees but also enhance organizational performance through improved engagement, reduced absenteeism, and greater employee retention.

In recent years, scholars have increasingly connected family-friendly HRM practices with the concept of career sustainability. Sustainable careers refer to the long-term capacity of individuals to remain productive, satisfied, and employable across different stages of their professional lives⁵. According to De Vos *et al.*, sustainable careers are shaped by a combination of individual agency, organizational support, and contextual factors such as family responsibilities and workplace policies². Organizations that provide supportive HRM practices help employees maintain continuity in their careers while managing life transitions such as childbirth and family caregiving. Research suggests that when organizations actively promote work–life balance and family support, employees experience greater career stability, higher motivation, and improved long-term career development outcomes⁴.

Another important dimension increasingly highlighted in recent literature is reproductive well-being, which refers to the physical, psychological, and emotional aspects of reproductive health that may influence women's participation in the workforce. While HRM research has traditionally focused on general employee well-being, recent studies emphasize that reproductive health issues such as pregnancy, fertility concerns, and menstrual health can significantly influence women's workplace experiences and career trajectories. Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources theory provides a useful framework for understanding this relationship by suggesting that individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources that support their well-being and performance⁶. When workplaces fail to provide adequate support for reproductive health needs, women may experience stress, career interruptions, and reduced engagement. Conversely, organizations that offer supportive policies such as maternity benefits, health support programs, and flexible work arrangements can help women maintain both reproductive well-being and career continuity.

The relevance of family-friendly HRM practices has become particularly significant in the Chinese

context due to demographic changes and evolving family policies. China's transition from the one-child policy to the two-child and three-child policies has created new expectations for women to balance employment with family responsibilities. Research indicates that workplace conditions and organizational support play a crucial role in shaping women's fertility decisions and career participation in China^{7,8}. Inadequate family support policies within organizations can discourage women from pursuing long-term career opportunities or expanding their families, highlighting the need for more inclusive and supportive HRM practices. Consequently, understanding how family-friendly HRM influences reproductive well-being and career sustainability among female employees is critical for addressing gender inequality in the labor market and promoting sustainable workforce participation.

Despite the growing body of research on work–family balance and sustainable careers, there remains a lack of empirical studies examining the integrated relationship between family-friendly HRM practices, reproductive well-being, and career sustainability, particularly within the Chinese workplace context. Much of the existing literature focuses on work–family conflict or career outcomes separately, while limited attention has been given to reproductive well-being as a mediating factor influencing women's career trajectories. Addressing this gap is essential for developing a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational policies can support female employees' well-being and long-term career development. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the literature by examining the role of family-friendly HRM practices in promoting reproductive well-being and career sustainability among female employees in China.

Methods

Research design

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between family-friendly human resource management (HRM) practices, reproductive well-being, and career sustainability among female employees in China. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to empirically test the relationships between clearly defined constructs using statistical analysis. Quantitative methods were widely used in HRM and

organizational behavior research to examine causal relationships between workplace policies and employee outcomes¹. The cross-sectional design enabled the collection of data from a large number of respondents at a single point in time, allowing the study to assess the influence of family-friendly HRM practices on reproductive well-being and long-term career sustainability.

Population and sampling

The study was conducted in Jiangsu Province, China, mainly in Nanjing and nearby urban/industrial areas. Data were collected from female employees working in organizations located in Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, and Changzhou. The participating organizations represented five employment sectors: education, healthcare, corporate offices, manufacturing, and service industries. To protect institutional confidentiality, the names of the organizations were anonymized and reported by sector and location rather than by official institutional name. The participating organizations included in Table 1.

The target population consisted of female employees working in formal organizations in Jiangsu Province, China. The accessible population included female employees from education, healthcare, corporate, manufacturing, and service-sector organizations in Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, and Changzhou. Female employees were selected because the study focused on the relationship between family-friendly human resource management, reproductive well-being, and career sustainability.

A total of 342 valid responses were included in the final analysis. The sample consisted of female employees aged 20 years and above who were currently employed in one of the participating organizations. Convenience sampling was used because a complete list of female employees across organizations was not available, and access to respondents depended on organizational permission and employee willingness to participate.

Questionnaire development

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire designed to measure the key constructs of the study. The questionnaire was constructed by adapting measurement items from previously validated scales used in HRM, work–

family balance, and career sustainability research. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: demographic information, family-friendly HRM practices, reproductive well-being, and career sustainability. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

The family-friendly HRM practices scale was adapted from the Family-Supportive Supervisor Behavior (FSSB) scale developed by Hammer et al. which measured employees' perceptions of organizational and supervisory support for family responsibilities⁴. The scale included items related to flexible work arrangements, parental leave policies, supervisor understanding of family needs, and organizational support for work–life balance. Previous research has shown that family-supportive workplace policies significantly reduced work–family conflict and improved employee well-being and job satisfaction⁵.

The reproductive well-being construct was measured through items assessing employees' perceptions of workplace support related to reproductive health, including pregnancy support, menstrual health considerations, emotional well-being related to reproductive concerns, and organizational understanding of women's reproductive needs. The items were developed based on existing literature that addressed reproductive health and workplace well-being, drawing on the broader framework of employee health and resource preservation described in Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources theory, which emphasized the role of organizational resources in supporting employee well-being and reducing stress⁶.

The career sustainability scale was adapted from the sustainable career framework proposed by De Vos, Van der Heijden, and Akkermans, which conceptualized sustainable careers as the ability of individuals to maintain long-term employability, career continuity, and job satisfaction over time⁷. The scale included items measuring career development opportunities, intention to remain in the organization, perceived career stability, and long-term professional growth.

Prior to full data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed for clarity and content validity to ensure that the items appropriately captured the constructs under investigation.

Table 1: The participating organizations

Organization code	Sector	Location
Organization A	Higher education institution	Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China
Organization B	Healthcare institution/hospital	Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China
Organization C	Corporate/private office	Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China
Organization D	Manufacturing company	Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China
Organization E	Service-sector enterprise	Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, China

Minor modifications were made to adapt the wording of the items to the Chinese workplace context.

Data collection procedure

Data were collected through online survey platforms such as Qualtrics and Google Forms. The survey link was distributed to potential respondents through professional networks and online platforms. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity of responses were assured to encourage honest and unbiased responses.

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and SmartPLS software. The analysis consisted of several steps. First, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents. Second, reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. Third, correlation analysis was performed to examine relationships among the key variables. Finally, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized relationships between family-friendly HRM practices, reproductive well-being, and career sustainability. SEM was widely recommended for examining complex relationships among latent variables and for testing mediation effects in organizational research³.

Ethical considerations

The study adhered to standard ethical research practices. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study before completing the survey. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would only be used for academic

research purposes. No personal identifying information was collected, ensuring the anonymity and privacy of respondents.

Results

Descriptive statistics of respondents

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the survey. A total of 342 valid responses were obtained from female employees working in different sectors in China. The demographic variables included age, marital status, educational background, and work experience.

The demographic profile shows that the majority of respondents were between 30–39 years old (41.5%), indicating that most participants were in the active stage of their professional careers and reproductive life cycle. Additionally, 63.2% of respondents were married, which is relevant for examining work–family dynamics and reproductive well-being. In terms of education, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (50.6%), suggesting that the sample largely consisted of professionally educated female employees.

Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement scales used in the study. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for each construct.

The reliability analysis results indicate that all constructs demonstrate high internal consistency, as the Cronbach's alpha values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 for acceptable reliability. The career sustainability scale showed the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.91$), indicating strong consistency among the items measuring long-term career development and job stability. Similarly, family-friendly HRM practices ($\alpha = 0.89$) and reproductive well-being ($\alpha = 0.86$) also demonstrated strong reliability, confirming that the

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 342)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20–29	108	31.6
	30–39	142	41.5
	40–49	69	20.2
	50+	23	6.7
Marital Status	Single	126	36.8
	Married	216	63.2
Education	Bachelor's	173	50.6
	Master's	134	39.2
	Doctorate	35	10.2
Work Experience	<5 years	94	27.5
	5–10 years	148	43.3
	>10 years	100	29.2

Table 3: Reliability analysis

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Family-Friendly HRM Practices	6	0.89
Reproductive Well-Being	5	0.86
Career Sustainability	5	0.91

Table 4: Logistic regression results predicting career sustainability

Predictor	B	SE	Wald	Exp (B)	p-value
Family-Friendly HRM	0.82	0.15	29.87	2.27	<0.001
Reproductive Well-being	0.64	0.12	22.45	1.89	<0.001
Constant	-1.35	0.30	20.25	—	<0.001

Table 5: Structural model results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	t-value	Result
H1	Family-Friendly HRM → Reproductive Well-Being	0.52	8.4	Supported
H2	Family-Friendly HRM → Career Sustainability	0.39	6.1	Supported
H3	Reproductive Well-Being → Career Sustainability	0.33	5.2	Supported

measurement scales used in the questionnaire were appropriate for the study.

Logistic regression analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the key study variables: family-friendly HRM practices, reproductive well-being, and career sustainability. Logistic regression analysis was conducted to assess the independent effects of family-friendly HRM practices and reproductive well-being on career sustainability. The overall model was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 48.72$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the predictors reliably distinguished between employees with high and low career sustainability.

Structural equation model results

To examine the hypothesized relationships between the study variables, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted. The structural model results indicate that family-friendly HRM practices significantly influence reproductive well-being ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that supportive HR policies, such as flexible working arrangements and family-supportive supervisors, play a critical role in improving women's reproductive well-being. Additionally, family-friendly HRM practices were found to have a significant positive impact on career sustainability ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that organizations that provide family-supportive policies enable female employees to maintain stable and long-term careers. Furthermore, reproductive well-being significantly influenced career sustainability ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that when female employees experience better reproductive health and emotional stability, they are more likely to remain engaged and productive in their professional careers. Overall, the results support the conceptual framework of the study, demonstrating that family-friendly HRM practices contribute to sustainable careers both directly and indirectly through reproductive well-being.

Discussion

The present study examined the role of family-friendly human resource management (HRM) practices and reproductive well-being in shaping career sustainability among female employees in China. Using logistic regression analysis, the findings provide robust evidence that both organizational support mechanisms and individual

well-being significantly influence the likelihood of sustaining long-term careers^{10,11}.

The first key finding indicates that family-friendly HRM practices significantly increase the likelihood of higher career sustainability among female employees. This suggests that organizational policies such as flexible working arrangements, parental leave, and supervisor support are not merely supportive mechanisms but critical determinants of career continuity. Employees who perceive stronger institutional support are more likely to remain engaged in their professional roles and sustain long-term employment trajectories^{7,12}. This finding reinforces existing literature which emphasizes that supportive workplace environments reduce work–family conflict and enhance employee retention. From a theoretical perspective, this result aligns with the sustainable career framework, which highlights the importance of organizational resources in enabling individuals to maintain productive and continuous careers across life stages^{10,13}.

The second major finding demonstrates that reproductive well-being significantly predicts career sustainability. Female employees who reported higher levels of reproductive well-being were more likely to belong to the high career sustainability group. This finding underscores the importance of considering reproductive health as a central component of employee well-being, rather than treating it as a peripheral issue. Reproductive well-being encompasses physical, emotional, and psychological dimensions, all of which influence women's capacity to participate consistently in the workforce^{14,15}. The results suggest that when organizations create environments that acknowledge and support reproductive health needs, employees are better positioned to sustain their careers over time. This finding extends previous research by empirically linking reproductive well-being to long-term career outcomes, an area that has remained underexplored in HRM literature.

Importantly, the findings reveal that both family-friendly HRM practices and reproductive well-being independently contribute to career sustainability. The logistic regression results demonstrate that even when considered simultaneously, each factor retains a significant effect, indicating that organizational support and individual well-being operate as complementary yet distinct pathways. This dual influence highlights that sustainable careers are shaped not only by

external organizational conditions but also by internal well-being states. Consequently, interventions aimed at improving career sustainability must adopt a holistic approach that integrates both structural workplace policies and employee-centered health support systems^{16,17}.

The findings are particularly significant within the Chinese socio-economic context. China's evolving demographic policies, including the transition to two-child and three-child policies, have increased expectations on women to balance professional responsibilities with reproductive roles. However, institutional support has not always kept pace with these changing expectations. The results of this study suggest that organizations play a critical role in bridging this gap by implementing family-friendly HRM practices that reduce the tension between work and family life. In doing so, organizations can contribute not only to individual career sustainability but also to broader societal goals related to workforce participation and demographic stability.

Furthermore, the findings support the relevance of Conservation of Resources theory, which posits that individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources that support their functioning and well-being. In this study, family-friendly HRM practices represent organizational resources, while reproductive well-being reflects personal resource stability. The significant effects observed in the analysis indicate that when both types of resources are available, employees are more likely to sustain their careers. Conversely, the absence of such resources may increase vulnerability to career disruption, particularly among female employees who face greater work–family demands^{18–21}.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence of the combined role of organizational support and reproductive well-being in influencing career sustainability. Unlike prior research that has examined work–family conflict or career outcomes in isolation, this study integrates these dimensions within a single analytical framework. The results highlight that sustainable careers among female employees cannot be achieved through workplace policies alone, but require a comprehensive approach that also addresses reproductive health and well-being. This integrated perspective offers a more nuanced understanding of how organizations can support female employees in maintaining stable and fulfilling.

Strengths and limitations

One of the major strengths of this study is that it integrates family-friendly HRM practices with reproductive well-being and career sustainability, which has received limited attention in previous research. By combining these constructs, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational policies influence women's career trajectories and well-being. Additionally, the study focuses on female employees in China, a context where demographic changes and family policy reforms have significantly influenced women's participation in the workforce. This contextual focus enhances the relevance of the findings for both academic research and organizational policy development.

However, several limitations should also be acknowledged. First, the study employed a cross-sectional research design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships among the variables. Longitudinal research could provide deeper insights into how family-friendly HRM practices influence career sustainability over time. Second, the study relied on self-reported survey data, which may introduce potential biases such as social desirability bias or common method variance. Future studies could incorporate multiple data sources, such as organizational records or supervisor evaluations, to enhance the robustness of the findings. Finally, the use of convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the results to all female employees in China. Future research could adopt probability sampling methods and include participants from a broader range of industries and organizational settings.

Implications for policy and practice

The findings of this study provide several important implications for both organizational practice and academic research. From a managerial perspective, the results highlight the importance of implementing family-friendly human resource management (HRM) practices to support female employees in balancing professional and reproductive responsibilities. Organizations that offer flexible working arrangements, parental leave policies, and supportive managerial attitudes can significantly enhance employees' reproductive well-being and long-term career sustainability. These findings suggest that HR managers should prioritize the

development of policies that address employees' family and reproductive needs, as such initiatives not only improve employee well-being but also contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee retention. Previous studies have similarly emphasized that family-supportive workplace environments can reduce work–family conflict and improve employee performance^{1,2}.

From a policy perspective, the results of this study are particularly relevant for countries experiencing demographic and labor market changes, such as China. As governments introduce policies encouraging higher fertility rates, organizations must play a complementary role by creating workplace environments that support female employees during different stages of their reproductive life cycle. Without supportive workplace policies, female employees may experience increased stress, career interruptions, or reduced workforce participation. Therefore, policymakers should encourage organizations to adopt family-supportive HRM practices that promote gender equality, reproductive health support, and sustainable workforce participation. Such initiatives could include workplace childcare facilities, reproductive health support programs, and flexible work arrangements that enable women to balance both family and career responsibilities.

The study also contributes to academic literature by integrating three important constructs—family-friendly HRM practices, reproductive well-being, and career sustainability—within a single conceptual framework. While previous studies have often examined work–family conflict or sustainable careers separately, this research highlights the importance of reproductive well-being as a mediating factor influencing women's career outcomes. This integrated perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of how workplace policies affect female employees' long-term career development and overall well-being. Future research can build upon this framework by examining additional mediating or moderating factors such as organizational culture, gender equality policies, and leadership support.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between family-friendly HRM practices, reproductive well-

being, and career sustainability among female employees in China. The findings demonstrate that supportive HRM practices play a significant role in improving women's reproductive well-being and promoting sustainable career development. Organizations that provide family-supportive policies, flexible work arrangements, and supportive leadership create a work environment that enables female employees to balance their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.

The results further indicate that reproductive well-being is an important factor influencing career sustainability. Female employees who experience greater well-being related to reproductive health and workplace support are more likely to remain engaged in their careers and achieve long-term professional stability. These findings emphasize the need for organizations to recognize reproductive well-being as a critical dimension of employee well-being and workforce sustainability.

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of adopting family-friendly HRM practices as a strategic organizational approach to support female employees and promote gender-inclusive workplaces. By implementing supportive policies that address both professional and personal needs, organizations can enhance employee well-being, strengthen workforce retention, and contribute to sustainable career development for women. Future research should further explore the long-term effects of family-friendly HRM practices and investigate how different organizational and cultural contexts shape the relationship between workplace support, reproductive well-being, and career sustainability.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Funding

This work was supported by the General Project of Philosophy and Social Science Research in Universities of Jiangsu Province "Research on the Dynamic Management Mechanism of Jiangsu Enterprise Innovation Strategy Implementation Under the Background of High-quality Development" (No. 2021SJA0097), and the National Natural Science Foundation of China "A Study of the Organizational Pervasiveness and the

Effect of Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation in Digital Corporate Entrepreneurship: An Attention-based View Perspective" (No. 72302074).

Authors' contributions

FL and XZ conceived and designed the study. FL and XZ performed data collection and cleaning. SG conducted the statistical analysis and interpreted the results. FL and SG drafted the initial manuscript. XZ and SG reviewed and revised the manuscript critically for important intellectual content. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Data availability

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

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