

## Article

# The Impact of Idiosyncratic Deals on Coworkers' Interactive Behavior: The Moderating Role of Developmental Human Resource Management Practices

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**Abstract:** Organizations have come to recognize the importance of their human capital, particularly their top-performing employees, in sustaining their businesses in today's competitive 21st-century landscape. To reward these few talented employees, organizations offer them preferential treatment in the form of idiosyncratic deals (i-deals). I-deals can effectively improve the performance of recipients, but this is not enough to demonstrate their management effectiveness. We should also measure their functional impact from the perspective of bystanders. This study seeks to explore the functional and dysfunctional impacts of i-deals on bystanders. We collected two-wave leader–employee matching data from sales teams, obtaining a sample of 108 leaders and 546 employees. The results indicate that coworkers' perceptions of other employees' i-deals (CPOEID) can provoke either malicious envy, which can lead to negative workplace gossip, or benign envy, which encourages feedback seeking. Developmental HRM practices not only lessen the positive effect of CPOEID on malicious and benign envy but also reduce the indirect effect of CPOEID on negative workplace gossip and feedback-seeking through malicious or benign envy. Our study, which applies social comparison theory, examines the double-edged effects of differentiated HRM practices on coworker interactive behavior. Additionally, our findings demonstrate the complementarity between differentiated and standardized HRM practices.

**Keywords:** idiosyncratic deals; malicious envy; benign envy; negative workplace gossip; feedback seeking; developmental human resource management practices; the bystander perspective



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## 1. Introduction

Organizations have come to recognize the importance of their human capital, particularly their top-performing employees, in sustaining their businesses in today's competitive 21st-century landscape. Research by Aguinis and O'Boyle [1] indicates that the top ten percent of employees may generate 30 percent of an organization's value, with the top quarter of employees creating 50 percent of the value. Standardized human resource management (HRM) is no longer adequate to meet the needs of attracting, motivating, and retaining talented employees [2]. To reward these few talented employees, organizations incorporate their personal preferences into job design by offering them preferential treatment in the form of idiosyncratic deals (i-deals). These i-deals may include higher salaries, better opportunities for advancement, higher social status, and other resources [3], as well as preferential selection for new projects, advanced training programs, and serving key high-quality customers [4].

I-deals, which refer to “voluntary, personalized agreements of a nonstandard nature that are negotiated between individual employees and their employers regarding terms that benefit each party” [5,6], have been studied primarily from the perspective of the recipient [7]. Studies have found that i-deals promote positive cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and performance outcomes for i-dealers, such as self-efficacy [8], affective commitment [9],

job satisfaction [10], work engagement [11], organizational citizenship behavior [12], voice behavior [13], and job performance [14]. However, the implementation of i-deals involves not only a binary interaction between the recipient (target employee) and the grantor (manager) but also a third party, the bystander (coworkers) [15]. While much progress has been made in understanding the effectiveness of policy management of i-deals from the recipient's perspective, a comprehensive understanding is limited without the bystander's viewpoint [7]. I-deals can only be accessed by a select few talented employees, while the majority of workers remain bystanders. Consequently, the reaction of bystanders to i-deals will be a critical factor in determining the success of differentiated management practices [5,6,16]. I-deals can effectively improve the performance of recipients, but this is not enough to demonstrate the effectiveness of special talent policies. We should also measure the perspective of bystanders; in particular, we need to consider the functional and dysfunctional impacts of individual agreements on those observing the situation [17]. In other words, i-deals can serve as a positive example and encourage coworkers to improve their performance through positive interpersonal interaction. I-dealers should also strive to gain the understanding and support of their colleagues to avoid any misunderstandings or exclusions that could lead to a decrease in their own performance.

Specifically, we need to understand how i-deals affect coworkers' functional and dysfunctional outcomes from an interpersonal behavior perspective. On the one hand, feedback seeking is a proactive behavior to acquire valuable information and feedback in the organization [18–20], which involves both direct inquiry and indirect monitoring strategies that can effectively promote individual performance [21]. Considering that i-deals can effectively boost colleagues' self-improvement motivation [22] and learning cognition [23], employees will exploit the opportunity to obtain insightful suggestions to improve performance by observing and imitating the working practices of i-dealers and asking for advice from i-dealers. Therefore, we aim to elucidate the potential of i-deals to improve coworkers' performance by characterizing positive interactive behavior as feedback seeking.

On the other hand, the literature largely focuses on the negative effects of i-deals on in-role bystander behaviors, such as work withdrawal behavior [24], turnover [25], and deviant behavior [26]. However, the destructive consequences of individual agreements are not limited to colleagues and can also extend to negative interpersonal interactions (e.g., negative workplace gossip), resulting in a lose-lose situation for both the recipient and the bystander. Negative workplace gossip can damage the gossip target's reputation and image [27], increase physical and psychological stress [28], and reduce task performance [29]. In severe cases, it may even lead to the resignation of talented employees, thus undermining talent management policies. To further understand the dysfunctional effects of i-deals that lead to misunderstandings and confrontations among coworkers, we use negative workplace gossip to characterize the negative interpersonal interactions that result from them.

As the saying goes, "tall trees catch much wind". Thus, coworkers may regard i-dealers as social references and may use them as a comparison to re-evaluate their own status in the organization [30]. The result of a comparison of disadvantaged status can lead to the development of workplace envy among coworkers [31]. Envy is a negative affective state resulting from an upward comparison between the envier and the envied person with respect to the object of envy [32,33]. This comparison can manifest in either negative, threatening, or consumptive forms (such as malicious envy) or positive, competitive, and assimilative forms (such as benign envy) [4]. Malicious envy may lead to cold violence in the workplace [4,22,34–36], while benign envy can motivate employees to strive to improve themselves [22,36]. Specifically, coworkers' perceptions of other employees' i-deals (CPOEID) can have a significant impact on how coworkers feel and behave in the workplace [37,38]. This can range from malicious envy, resulting in negative workplace gossip behavior, to benign envy, which encourages coworkers to seek feedback. In this

study, we explore the double-edged effects of CPOEID on coworker exchanges using malicious and benign envy, drawing on social comparison theory.

We recognize the importance of personalized management policies to reward high-performing employees, but we must also invest in the human capital of ordinary staff by implementing developmental HRM practices to ensure sustainable business development. Our study seeks to answer the question of whether differentiation and standardized HRM practices are complementary. Specifically, can standardized HRM practices maximize the positive performance-enhancement effects of i-deals (e.g., encouraging feedback-seeking behavior) while minimizing the potential for misunderstanding and rejection (e.g., reducing negative workplace gossip)? Developmental HRM practices are designed to satisfy employees' needs [39], empower them, and emphasize the importance of improving their abilities, work values, and sense of achievement [40]. Its provision of management practices such as compensation, benefits, training, and promotion can satisfy the needs of the majority of employees [12]. I-deals are used to supplement a few select talented employees with specialized knowledge, skills, and unique characteristics, which can help reduce coworkers' negative confrontation and motivate bystanders to view i-deals in a positive light [15]. Consequently, we sought to examine how standardized HRM policies can either reduce the negative effects of differentiated HRM policies or support their positive effects, using developmental HRM practices as moderators.

Our study offers two primary contributions to the research field of differentiated HRM policies and their impact on coworkers' interactive behaviors. First, we systematically examined the managerial effects of differentiated HRM policies from a bystander perspective, exploring both the beneficial and detrimental outcomes [16]. We respond to Kong et al.'s call for enriching negative outcomes of i-deals [26]. To this end, we explored the mediating role of binary envy, i.e., benign envy and malicious envy [41]. We empirically tested Marescaux et al.'s suggestion to integrate the contrast and assimilation effects [42]. The contrast effect is consistent with the findings of previous studies [22,34–36,43] that cite malicious envy as a potential precursor to "cold violence" behavior in the workplace [28]. The assimilation effect echoes Lee and Duffy's research, which suggests exploring the positive effects of workplace envy [44]. Second, we provide empirical support for the complementarity of differential and standardized HRM practices as we explore the impact of organizational policies on employee workplace outcomes. We respond to Anand et al.'s call to examine how pervasive HRMPs can mitigate the dysfunctional outcomes of i-deals [12], providing a comprehensive understanding of the role of management policies on employees' implicit emotions and explicit behaviors. Specifically, we examine the moderating role of developmental HRM practices and provide supporting evidence that developmental HRM practices contribute to employees' psychological well-being [45,46], i.e., that developmental HRM practices are effective in reducing their negative emotions.

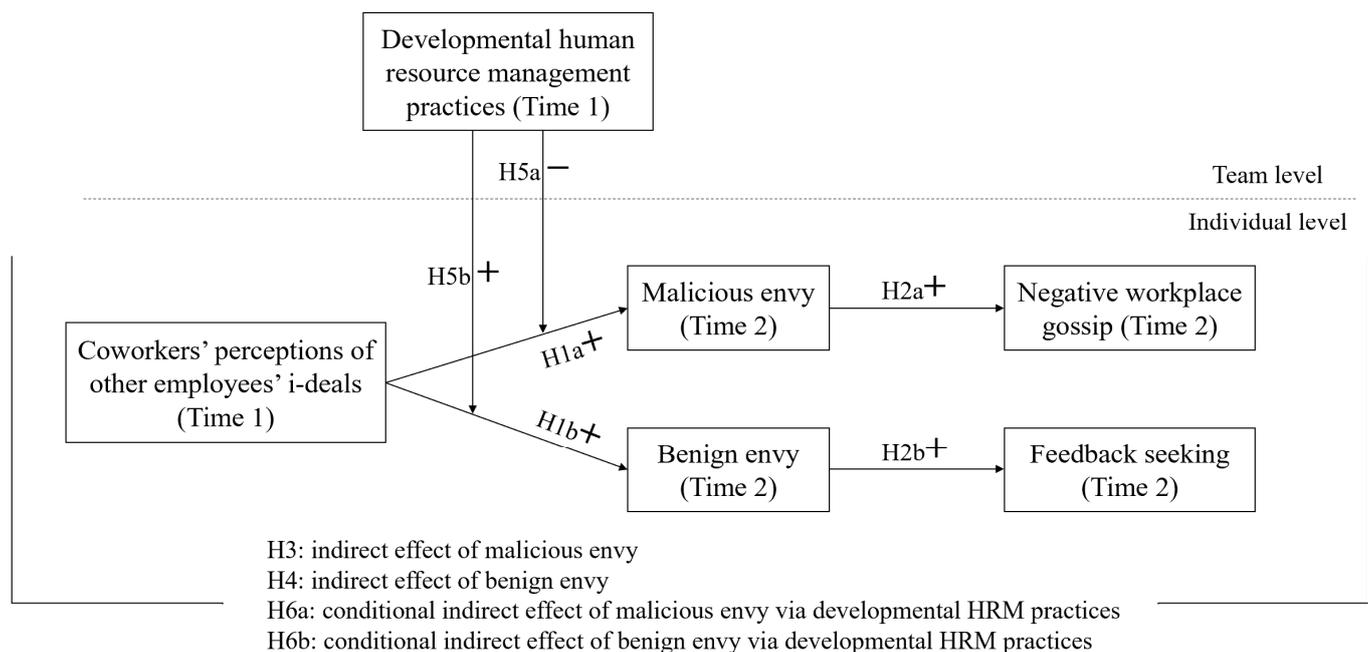
## 2. Theory and Hypothesis

### 2.1. Idiosyncratic Deals

In the late 1990s, the American scholar Rousseau noted that employees often negotiate individualized work arrangements with their employers to meet their own needs while still contributing effectively to the organization, which he termed "idiosyncratic deals" [5,6]. These agreements, which can be established in written or unwritten forms, are established through equal and voluntary negotiation between the organization and the employee (recipient) and provide the employee with unique working conditions that differ from those of their coworkers (bystanders) engaged in similar work [47,48]. These working conditions can involve all aspects of employment, such as compensation, working hours and locations, training and career development, job responsibilities and security, recognition and social support, or a combination of these resources. This concept has been widely accepted [10].

The existing research is divided into two perspectives: recipient and bystander [15]. The recipient perspective focuses on the positive effects on employee emotion, cognition, motivation, attitude, and behavior [30]. The bystander perspective focuses on the conse-

quences of coworkers' perceptions of other employees' i-deals (CPOEID). Bystanders' active perception of whether and to what extent others enjoy i-deals, referred to as CPOEID [49], has the potential to positively influence coworkers to strive for self-improvement [22] and contribute more employee creativity [23]. Unfortunately, CPOEID can also lead to negative consequences, including complaints about the status quo, withdrawal, and deviant behavior in the workplace [24,26], and issues that come with a competitive climate and workplace ostracism among employees [25]. To further address the effectiveness of talent management policy, we shed light on the complementarity of differentiated and standardized HRM practices and provide comprehensive insight into the functional and dysfunctional effects of i-deals. Additionally, the conceptual model used in this study is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Theoretical model. Note: A “+” indicates a potential positive effect, while a “-” indicates a potential negative effect.

## 2.2. Coworkers' Perceptions of Other Employees' I-Deals and Envy

According to social comparison theory, employees will actively seek out social information related to others and compare it as a basis for behavioral decisions [50]. Employees tend to compare upward [51], such as by choosing employees who have more advantages in terms of remuneration, working conditions, performance, or even social relations as reference objects [22,52]. I-dealers possess special knowledge, skills, and other characteristics that reflect their market value [7]. By providing them with i-deals, organizations demonstrate recognition and appreciation of their competence [53], which is one of the most prominent features of upward comparison among coworkers [54]. Additionally, coworkers are highly sensitive to compensation and promotions related to their vital interests [22]. The advantages of i-dealers in this regard can lead to further upward comparison among coworkers. Upward comparison prompts individuals to recognize the advantages possessed by others, which may lead to envy [33]. A meta-analysis based on 68 empirical papers examined the predictive role of social comparison on workplace envy [31]. Specifically, the organization's principles for allocating resources such as job promotions, task assignments, and compensation bonuses can easily lead to unfavorable social comparison results between coworkers and i-deals [55]. I-deals command a large number of resources, which can increase the resource threat perceptions of their coworkers and increase the work stress on those coworkers [4], thus activating the envy of coworkers. Coworkers' self-evaluations (e.g., self-esteem and self-confidence) quietly decrease after they perceive more negative information in upward social comparisons with i-deals [51,54]. Studies have

shown that people with low self-esteem are more inclined to compare themselves to others, are more sensitive to unfavorable comparison information [56], are and more likely to experience strong feelings of envy (i.e., malicious and benign envy).

**Hypothesis 1.** *CPOEID positively affects malicious envy (1a) and benign envy (1b).*

### 2.3. Coworker Envy and Interactive Behavior

Negative workplace gossip refers to situations in which others talk behind the back of or maliciously spread negative news about an employee [57], and such behavior can be regarded as a covert and indirect form of attack, violation, and injury [58]. Since malicious envy is a negative emotion consisting of inferiority, hostility, and resentment [32,33], it induces coworkers to “pull down” i-dealers by engaging in negative workplace gossip. First, negative workplace gossip can damage the reputations and social images of i-dealers, erode the harmony of their working relationships [58], and decrease i-dealers’ energy, time, and attention. Individuals with malicious envy can make up and spread negative gossip and deliberately guide the development of wrong perceptions to reduce their own feelings of hostility, inferiority, and frustration [59] and vent their negative emotions of anxiety and resentment via hidden interpersonal provocations and confrontations. Second, the hostile element of envy can activate an individual’s moral disengagement [33], thus prompting the individual to break through the self-restraints imposed by moral standards [60] and engage in destructive behaviors free from self-blame and guilt. Since hostility is the main characteristic of malicious envy [41] and since the covert nature of negative workplace gossip prevents the adverse effects on i-dealers from being immediately apparent, this situation further reduces coworkers’ self-blame and guilt [60] and facilitates their self-approval and rationalization regarding unethical behavior [50]. Furthermore, since gossip involves at least three parties in terms of human interaction (the gossipier, the gossip receiver, and the gossip target), it is considered a relational or group process [58]. Coworkers with malicious envy can establish friendships with other coworkers (coworkers who have ordinary relationships with i-dealers) by sharing malicious gossip concerning i-dealers [44], and they can thus form an interpersonal circle to exclude i-dealers jointly [59]. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2a.** *Coworkers’ malicious envy positively affects negative workplace gossip.*

Coworkers can respond to envy in either a positive or negative manner. Negatively, they may engage in revenge and sabotage; positively, they can focus on becoming outstanding themselves [61]. Alternatively, they can adopt a proactive approach by seeking valuable information and feedback within the organization to meet the organization’s and individuals’ development needs [18–20]. Benign envy, although a negative emotional experience, includes a longing for the object of envy, admiration, or emulation of the other [41,62]. Employees with benign envy expect to be in the same situation as the envied person in the future (i.e., assimilation effect) [54], and they are motivated to benchmark themselves against the envied person and work to achieve “stimuli” such as better positions, salaries, social capital, popularity, and obtaining i-deals [63]. Benign envy can promote self-improvement motivation among coworkers, encouraging them to proactively seek ways to improve themselves [22,43]. Coworkers tend to actively interact with the i-dealer, asking for advice and receiving more precise and targeted feedback [44]. Through questions and answers, coworkers can recognize the i-dealer’s strengths and their own weaknesses and gain valuable insight into how to improve (e.g., the i-dealer’s workflow and risky negative behaviors) [43]. Furthermore, benign envy can also enhance coworkers’ learning perceptions; they will see i-dealers as role models and learn to imitate their work practices through observation [23]. Therefore, seeking feedback makes it possible for coworkers to gradually close the gap with i-dealers [22]. In conclusion, benign envy stimulates coworkers’ motivation to improve themselves [41], prompts coworkers to actively

align themselves with i-dealers using feedback-inquiry behavior, and helps coworkers follow or even surpass i-dealers in the long term [64]. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2b.** *Coworkers' benign envy positively influences feedback seeking.*

Combining the contents of Hypotheses 1a and 2a, CPOEID leads to upward social comparison and inspires malicious envy. Those who gossip may choose to degrade the person they envy in an unrelated areas [65], i.e., spreading false information about the envied person in the workplace [43,44]. Harmful behaviors (i.e., negative workplace gossip) not only allow the aggressor to vent emotions and alleviate threat perceptions while impeding the performance of i-dealers and narrowing the gap between the two [66]. In addition, studies have examined the mediating role of malicious envy between the envied and harmful behaviors [4,22,34–36]. Accordingly, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3.** *CPOEID positively and indirectly affects coworkers' negative workplace gossip via malicious envy.*

Combining the contents of Hypotheses 1b and 2b, upward social comparisons due to the CPOEID can induce benign envy. Benign envy motivates coworkers to focus their attention on means of self-improvement [63] and to view i-dealers as inspiring role models [66]. Envious employees will use feedback-inquiry behavior to obtain information [36,44]. Coworkers thus bridge the gap between themselves and the envied person and alleviate pain via feedback-seeking. In addition, studies have emphasized the mediating role of benign envy between the envied and self-improvement [22,36,43]. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 4.** *CPOEID positively and indirectly affects coworkers' feedback-seeking behavior via benign envy.*

#### 2.4. The Moderating Role of Developmental HRM Practices

Developmental HRM practices refer to a system of human resource practices that focuses on the development of employees' potential and their future career development to achieve the common development of the organization and employees [40]. Such practices include four dimensions: diversified training, development evaluation, job design, and communication feedback [40]. In the context of high-level developmental HRM practices, the organization not only provides employees with diversified and multidimensional training, helps employees develop their abilities, and effectively reduces the gap between coworkers and i-deals but also provides training on how to cope with stress and emotions [40], optimize the work experiences of coworkers, mitigate the sense of threat to employees' self-esteem and status posed by i-dealers [67], and effectively relieve terrible feelings and malicious envy [68]. Such practices also focus on the growth of employees, stimulate their tendency to engage in challenging actions [61], and enhance the achievement of coworkers, as expected [43]. Simultaneously, the flexible and free job design mobilizes employees' self-motivation and self-management awareness [40], which not only further stimulates the internal drive of coworkers to increase personal effort and achieve goals [69] but also enhances the individual's sense of belonging and responsibility and encourages coworkers to engage in benign envy to meet expectations [43].

In the context of low-level developmental HRM practices, the organization provides only knowledge and skills training related to the position itself and uses outcome-oriented appraisals [70], which causes coworkers to anticipate their inability to decrease the gap between themselves and i-dealers in the future [54], increases coworkers' perception of the advantages of i-dealers [67], and prompts coworkers to attribute their disadvantaged positions to a lack of support from the organization [17], thus increasing coworkers' malicious

envy [41]. In addition, such an organization ignores employees' demands for autonomy, flexibility, and timely communication, which decreases the subjective initiative and internal drive of coworkers, thus inhibiting motivation to improve on the part of coworkers with benign envy. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 5.** *Developmental HRM practices moderate the relationships between CPOEID and coworker envy; compared with low-level developmental HRM practices, high-level developmental HRM practices weaken the positive effect of CPOEID on malicious envy (5a) and strengthen the positive effect of CPOEID on benign envy (5b).*

Based on this hypothesis, we argue that developmental HRM practices moderate the indirect effects of coworkers' malicious or benign envy on the relationships among CPEID, coworkers' negative workplace gossip, and feedback inquiry. When an organization's level of developmental HRM practices is relatively high, the organization can improve employees' abilities, guide their emotional release, and focus on their growth using diversified training programs and development evaluation [40]. The organization can mobilize employees' subjective initiative and improve employees' confidence with respect to asking for feedback using work design and communication feedback [64]. Although CPEID stimulates coworkers' malicious and benign envy, high-level developmental HRM practices can narrow the perceived gap between coworkers and i-dealers, reduce the destructive tendencies of coworkers with malicious envy to react negatively, strengthen coworkers' motivation to improve, and prompt employees with benign envy to actively seek feedback for self-improvement. When an organization's level of developmental HRM practices is low, its training is limited to professional skills, its assessment method is outcome-oriented [70], its work mode is rigid, and its communication channels are narrow. As CPEID induces benign and malicious envy in coworkers, low-level developmental HRM practices not only emphasize the upward advantages of i-dealers but also aggravate coworkers' negative emotions of low self-esteem, hostility, and resentment [41], which can lead to negative workplace gossip, with employees venting excess feelings of stress, threat, and negative emotions and damaging the advantages of i-dealers. In such situations, it is challenging to meet coworkers' needs for autonomy, thus increasing the costs and risks associated with employees' feedback-seeking [64]. Therefore, coworkers may abandon feedback-seeking and respond negatively. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 6.** *Developmental HRM practices moderate the mediating effect of coworker envy between CPOEID and the negative workplace gossip and feedback-seeking of coworkers. Compared with developmental HRM practices, high-level developmental HRM practices can attenuate the mediating effect of malicious envy on the relationship between CPOEID and negative workplace gossip (6a) and strengthen the mediating effect of benign envy on the relationship between CPOEID and feedback seeking (6b).*

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Samples and Procedures

This study focused on the sales teams at the Beijing and Qingdao branches of large Chinese insurance and financial services groups. Before administering the formal survey, we numbered the questionnaires for leaders and employees to facilitate leader–employee matching. To eliminate the concerns of leaders and employees, we emphasized that the survey results would be kept strictly confidential and used only for scientific research. We used a two-wave leader–employee matching approach, and both waves were distributed and collected on-site. In the first wave, employees reported their CPOEID and demographic characteristics, while leaders assessed the organization's level of developmental HRM practices and reported their team size. We required leaders and employees to report the last four digits of their mobile phone numbers to ensure the accuracy of time-lag questionnaire matching. Two weeks later, a second-wave on-site survey was conducted, which required

employees to report their malicious envy, benign envy, negative workplace gossip, and feedback seeking.

During the first wave, a total of 813 employees across 145 teams participated in the survey. Questionnaires with missing key variables or incorrectly completed attention test questions were excluded. By matching the number and last four digits of the reported mobile phone number, 108 questionnaires for leaders (74.48% effective) and 546 questionnaires for employees (67.16% effective) were obtained. Among them, 40.5% of respondents were female, while 59.5% were male; the ages of respondents were mainly concentrated between 26 and 40 years old (accounting for 85.71%); the sample size of respondents with bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, or above accounted for 81.136%; the average number of years of tenure was 4.439 ( $SD = 4.125$ ); and the team size was at least 3 and at most 15, with an average of 7.365 people per team ( $SD = 2.408$ ).

### 3.2. Measures

This study used a mature scale (7-point Likert scale; 1—not at all, 7—to a great extent) that was validated repeatedly for use in the Chinese context and that strictly followed the “translation–back translation” procedure developed by Brislin [71]. The scales were translated and corrected to avoid comprehension biases. Table 1 displays the source of the scale, the number of items, and the reliability of the key variables (refer to Appendix A for the item content).

**Table 1.** Measures of the key variables.

Variables	Scale Source	Item Number	Reliability
Coworkers' perceptions of other employees' i-deals	Ng and Feldman (2010) [38]	6	0.943
Benign envy	Lange et al. (2018) [41]	4	0.973
Malicious envy	Lange et al. (2018) [41]	4	0.961
Feedback seeking	VandeWalle et al. (2000) [19]	5	0.936
Negative workplace gossip	Chandra and Robinson (2009) [57]	3	0.969
Developmental human resource management practices	Tang et al. (2021) [40]	18	0.971

#### 3.2.1. Coworkers' Perceptions of Other Employees' I-Deals (Time 1)

Using the 6-item scale of Ng and Feldman [38], we measured the extent to which coworkers perceive i-dealers (referred to as employee A) in six dimensions: level of pay, advancement opportunities, skill training, career development opportunities, level of job security, and support for personal problems. An example item was “The organization promises [employee A] advancement opportunities that most employees in the department do not receive,” with an alpha coefficient of 0.943.

#### 3.2.2. Benign Envy and Malicious Envy (Time 2)

Adapting the scale developed by Lange et al. [41], employees self-assessed their envious reactions to i-dealers on their teams. Four items each were included in the benign envy and malicious envy sections. Sample items were “I want to work harder to accomplish the same achievements as [employee A]” (benign envy;  $\alpha = 0.973$ ) and “I have complained about [employee A] to someone else” (malicious envy;  $\alpha = 0.961$ ).

#### 3.2.3. Feedback-Seeking (Time 2)

For feedback-seeking, the 5-item scale developed by VandeWalle et al. [19] was used. An example item was “I often take the initiative to ask [employee A] for information regarding overall job performance”, with an alpha coefficient of 0.936.

### 3.2.4. Negative Workplace Gossip (Time 2).

Drawing on Campbell et al. [4], to avoid the high social approval effect of employee self-assessment, we used an indirect measure of employees' attitudes toward the dissemination of negative gossip against employee A by coworkers on the team. We adapted the 3-item scale developed by Chandra and Robinson [57] to measure negative gossip behaviors in the workplace with the following question: "Do you approve of the behavior of a coworker on your team when he or she exhibits the following behavior?" An example item was "Some coworkers on the team deliberately spread unfavorable gossip about [employee A]", with an alpha coefficient of 0.969.

### 3.2.5. Developmental Human Resource Management Practices (Time 1)

The 18-item scale developed by Tang et al. [40] was evaluated by team leaders to address four dimensions: diversified training, development evaluation, job design, and communication feedback. Sample items were "The organization provides training on stress and emotion management for employees; the organization includes the growth rate of employees in the assessment; the organization encourages employees to exchange information and share experiences; and smooth communication channels have been established within the organization" ( $\alpha = 0.971$ ).

### 3.2.6. Control Variables (Time 1)

Following the suggestions of Campbell et al. [4], we controlled for demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, tenure, and team size.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Test of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We used Mplus 7.4 to conduct a series of confirmatory factor analyses to confirm the distinctiveness of focal variables. Following Rogers and Schmitt's procedure [72], we parceled CPOEID, feedback-seeking, and developmental HRM practices into three items each. The results listed in Table 2 showed a good fit for the six-factor model ( $\chi^2 = 237.453$ ,  $df = 109$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.178$ , RMSEA = 0.046, CFI = 0.981, TLI = 0.976, SRMR (within) = 0.042).

**Table 2.** Results of confirmatory factor analyses.

Models	$\chi^2$	$df$	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR within
6-factor model	237.453	109	2.178	0.046	0.981	0.976	0.042
5-factor model	1520.105	113	13.452	0.151	0.792	0.744	0.111
4-factor model	2552.279	116	22.002	0.196	0.638	0.568	0.162
3-factor model	3669.673	118	31.099	0.235	0.474	0.380	0.207
2-factor model	5380.854	119	45.217	0.285	0.221	0.090	0.274

Notes: 6-factor model (hypothesized model), 5-factor model (malicious envy and negative workplace gossip merged), 4-factor model (malicious envy and negative workplace gossip merged; benign envy and feedback seeking merged), 1-factor model (CPOEID, malicious envy, and negative workplace gossip merged; benign envy and feedback seeking merged), 2-factor model (CPOEID, malicious envy, negative workplace gossip, benign envy and feedback seeking merged). RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; CFI, comparative fit index; TLI, Tucker–Lewis index; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual. Source: Mplus 7.4 software analysis.

### 4.2. Test of Common Method Variance

To ensure the reliability of the results, both process control and statistical control were used. Process control was achieved using questionnaire instructions, reverse coding, cross-formulation, and time-lag investigation. Statistical control was achieved using two techniques: "Harman's single-factor test" with SPSS 26.0 and the "unmeasured latent method factor technique" with Mplus 7.4 [73,74]. The results showed that the largest factor explained only 19.245% of the total variance (i.e., 55.716%), which is well below the 50% threshold [75]. Moreover, when we added the method factor to the "within level" of the

CFA model, it accounted for only 6.790% of the total explained variance, which is much lower than the 25% criterion [76]. Thus, the common method bias was not serious.

#### 4.3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients of key variables are listed in Table 3. CPOEID was significantly and positively correlated with malicious envy, benign envy, negative workplace gossip, and feedback seeking ( $r = 0.311$ ;  $r = 0.322$ ;  $r = 0.186$ ;  $r = 0.397$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Malicious envy had a significant and positive correlation with negative workplace gossip ( $r = 0.413$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Benign envy was found to be significantly related to feedback seeking ( $r = 0.358$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The hypothesized relationships among the variables were initially verified.

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics and correlations.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. CPOEID	5.016	1.431					
2. Malicious envy	5.203	1.527	0.311 **				
3. Benign envy	5.305	1.508	0.322 **	0.313 **			
4. Negative workplace gossip	4.883	1.905	0.186 **	0.413 **	0.144 **		
5. Feedback seeking	4.843	1.450	0.397 **	0.152 **	0.358 **	−0.018	
6. Developmental HRM practices	5.281	1.480	0.082	−0.044	0.070	−0.129 **	0.137 **

Notes: n (team) = 108, N (employee) = 546; \*\*  $p < 0.01$  and two-tailed test; Source: Mplus 7.4 software analysis.

#### 4.4. Hypothesis Testing

Employees self-rated individual-level variables such as CPOEID, envy, feedback inquiry, and negative workplace gossip, while team leaders evaluated team-level variables (i.e., developmental HRM practices). This study used a nested data model where members within the team evaluated the same i-dealers (referred to as employee A). The variance in the variables could be decomposed at both the individual and team levels. According to Kline [77], when ICC(1) is greater than 0.1, the multilevel structure of the data should not be ignored. The test results indicated significant interdepartmental differences (ICC (1) = 0.379, 0.310, 0.334, 0.328, and 0.425) for CPOEID, benign envy, malicious envy, feedback-seeking, and negative workplace gossip, respectively. Thus, we used multilevel structural equation modeling to investigate individual-level effects while controlling for team differences, effectively supplementing our study methodology.

##### 4.4.1. Test of Mediating Effect

The mediation analysis results are listed in Table 4. CPOEID positively predicted malicious envy and benign envy ( $\beta = 0.345$ ,  $\beta = 0.342$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), thus supporting Hypotheses 1a and 1b. Malicious envy and benign envy positively predicted negative workplace gossip and feedback seeking, respectively ( $\beta = 0.284$ ;  $\beta = 0.147$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), thus supporting Hypotheses 2a and 2b. The positive effects of CPOEID on negative workplace gossip and feedback inquiry remained significant ( $\beta = 0.247$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta = 0.335$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), thus tentatively supporting Hypotheses 3 and 4, which proposed that coworkers' malicious envy partially mediates the relationships between CPOEID and negative workplace gossip and that coworkers' benign envy partially mediates the relationship between CPOEID and feedback seeking.

**Table 4.** Results of the multilevel structural equation modeling analysis.

Variables	Malicious Envy		Negative Workplace Gossip		Benign Envy		Feedback-Seeking	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
<b>Individual level</b>								
Gender	0.182	0.125	−0.136	0.138	0.126	0.131	−0.074	0.092
Age	0.084	0.049	−0.008	0.057	0.052	0.043	−0.031	0.055
Education	−0.012	0.074	0.167	0.092	0.053	0.080	−0.079	0.083
Tenure	0.011	0.013	0.009	0.019	0.003	0.017	0.032	0.016
CPOEID (within)	0.345 ***	0.056	0.247 **	0.076	0.342 ***	0.065	0.335 ***	0.062
Malicious envy (within)			0.284 **	0.084				
Benign envy (within)							0.147 **	0.055
<b>Team level</b>								
Team size	0.021	0.043	0.093	0.053	−0.008	0.042	0.003	0.043
CPOEID (between)	0.329 *	0.142	−0.273	0.110	0.349	0.212	0.252	0.145
Malicious envy (between)			0.763 **	0.001				
Benign envy (between)							0.527 ***	0.129

Notes: n (team) = 108, N (employee) = 546; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . *SE*: Standard errors; Source: Mplus 7.4 software analysis.

The indirect effects of mediators are listed in Table 5. The indirect effect of CPOEID influence on coworkers' negative workplace gossip via malicious envy was 0.098 ( $p < 0.01$ ), and the indirect effect of coworkers' feedback inquiry via benign envy was 0.050 ( $p < 0.05$ ). With R, we used Monte Carlo simulations with 20,000 replicate samples to calculate 95% confidence intervals for the indirect effects. The confidence intervals for both indirect effects are significant ([0.0383, 0.1678], [0.0129, 0.0966], 0 excluded), thus providing further support for Hypotheses 3 and 4.

**Table 5.** Results of indirect effects of mediators.

Mediation	Indirect Effects	<i>SE</i>	Boot 95% CI
CPOEID → Malicious envy → Negative workplace gossip	0.098 **	0.036	[0.0383, 0.1678]
CPOEID → Benign envy → Feedback-seeking	0.050 *	0.023	[0.0129, 0.0966]

Notes: n (team) = 108, N (employee) = 546; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ . *SE*: standard error; *CI*: confidence interval; and bootstrapping randomly sampled 5000 times; Source: Mplus 7.4 software analysis.

#### 4.4.2. Test of the Moderating Effect

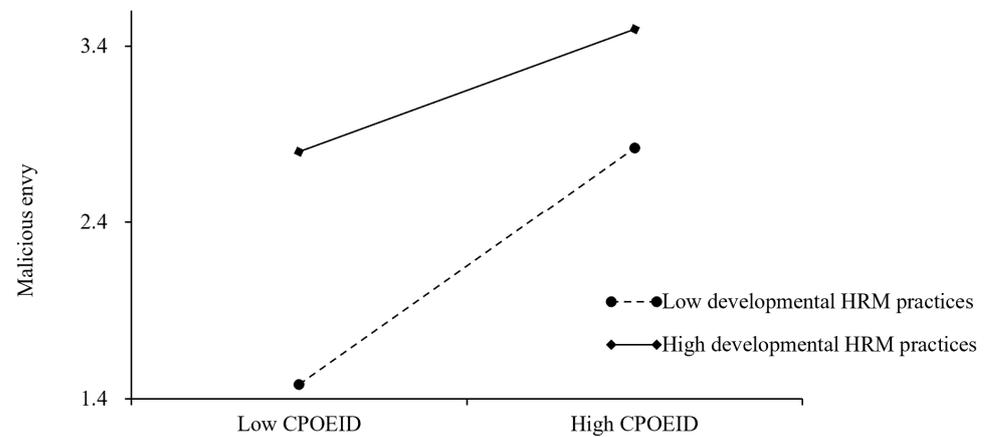
The moderated analysis conducted using multilevel modeling revealed that the interaction term between CPOEID and developmental HRM practices had a negative effect on both malicious envy ( $\beta = -0.077$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and benign envy ( $\beta = -0.105$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This result supports Hypothesis 5a but rejects Hypothesis 5b, which can be seen in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Results of multilevel modeling analysis of moderated mediation.

Variables	Malicious Envy		Negative Workplace Gossip		Benign Envy		Feedback Seeking	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
<b>Individual level</b>								
Gender	0.166	0.130	−0.157	0.135	0.168	0.119	−0.087	0.089
Age	0.081	0.048	−0.008	0.060	0.027	0.041	−0.028	0.055
Education	−0.012	0.071	0.155	0.093	0.053	0.066	−0.101	0.074
Tenure	0.014	0.013	0.007	0.019	0.010	0.016	0.027	0.016
CPOEID (within)			0.211 **	0.068			0.326 ***	0.057
Malicious envy (within)			0.278 **	0.084				
Benign envy (within)							0.144 *	0.058
<b>Team level</b>								
Team size	0.019	0.046	0.088	0.061	−0.002	0.021	0.003	0.043
CPOEID (between)	0.356 ***	0.052			0.217 **	0.073		
developmental HRM practices	0.337 *	0.171	−0.071	0.144	0.631 **	0.194	0.204 *	0.100
CPOEID × developmental HRM practices	−0.077 *	0.031			−0.105 **	0.036		

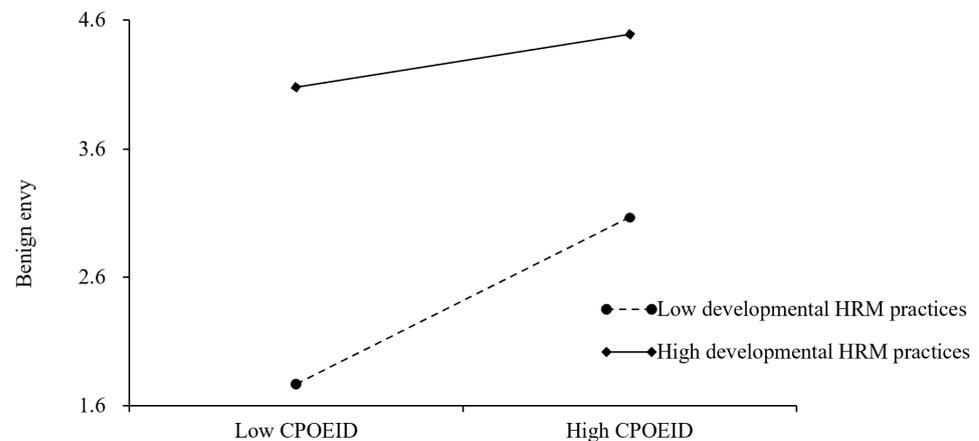
Notes: n (team) = 108, N (employee) = 546; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . *SE*: standard error; Source: Mplus 7.4 software analysis.

We plotted the moderating effects of developmental HRM practices one standard deviation below and one standard deviation above the mean. According to Figure 2, at lower levels of developmental HRM practices, CPOEID was positively related to malicious envy (simple slope = 0.470,  $p < 0.001$ ), while the relationship was significantly weakened at higher levels (simple slope = 0.242,  $p < 0.01$ ), thus further supporting Hypothesis 5a.



**Figure 2.** Interaction effect between CPOEID and developmental HRM practices on malicious envy.

According to Figure 3, CPOEID was positively related to benign envy at lower developmental HRM practices (simple slope = 0.455,  $p < 0.001$ ); however, this correlation was not significant at higher levels (simple slope = 0.144,  $p > 0.05$ ), suggesting that Hypothesis 5b was further rejected.



**Figure 3.** Interaction effect between CPOEID and developmental HRM practices on benign envy.

To examine the indirect effects of coworker envy at different levels of DHRMP, we used R to assess the 95% confidence intervals using Monte Carlo simulation with 20,000 replicate samples, and the results of this assessment are listed in Table 7. The indirect effect of CPOEID on coworkers' negative workplace gossip via malicious envy at high or low levels of DHRMP was 0.067 (95% CI = [0.0272, 0.1418], significant) and 0.131 (95% CI = [0.0468, 0.2059], significant), and the difference between these values was  $-0.063$  (95% CI = [ $-0.0921$ ,  $-0.0069$ ], significant), i.e., the indirect effect of malicious envy reduced due to increasing DHRMP; thus, Hypothesis 6a is supported. Similarly, the indirect effect of CPOEID on feedback-seeking through benign envy was 0.021 (95% CI = [ $-0.0071$ , 0.0485], ns) and 0.066 (95% CI = [0.0084, 0.0963], significant) at high and low levels of DHRMP, respectively. The difference between these two values is  $-0.045$  (95% CI = [ $-0.0681$ ,  $-0.0038$ ], significant). This indicates that the indirect effect of benign envy is attenuated by an increase in DHRMP, thus leading us to reject Hypothesis 6b.

**Table 7.** Results indicating the indirect effect of moderated mediation.

Moderator	Indirect Effect	SE	Boot 95% CI
<b>Developmental HRM Practices</b>			
CPOEID → Malicious envy → Negative workplace gossip			
High (Mean + SD)	0.067 *	0.033	[0.0272, 0.1418]
Low (Mean – SD)	0.131 **	0.043	[0.0468, 0.2059]
difference	–0.063 *	0.028	[–0.0921, –0.0069]
CPOEID → Benign envy → Feedback-seeking			
High (Mean + SD)	0.021	0.016	[–0.0071, 0.0485]
Low (Mean – SD)	0.066 *	0.028	[0.0084, 0.0963]
difference	–0.045 *	0.022	[–0.0681, –0.0038]

Notes: n (team) = 108, N (employee) = 546; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ . SE: standard error; CI: confidence interval; and bootstrapping randomly sampled 5000 times; Source: Mplus 7.4 software analysis.

## 5. Discussion

An investigation was conducted to explore the effects of CPOEID on coworker interactions, using social comparison theory as a framework, with envy as the mediator and developmental HRM practices as the moderator. An empirical study of 108 teams and 546 employees yielded the following key findings:

We systematically examined the managerial effectiveness of differentiated HRM policies from a bystander perspective, exploring both functional and dysfunctional outcomes. Prior research has explored the effects of i-deals on i-dealers' cognition, affect, behavior, and performance [7,30], but this does not provide a comprehensive measure of the effects of differentiated management policies. Therefore, we sought to explore the exemplary effect of i-dealers and investigate how i-deals support bystanders in their self-improvement efforts [17], while also avoiding disruptive interpersonal interaction behaviors of bystanders to protect i-dealers from reputational damage. Our findings showed that CPOEID had a positive effect on coworkers' negative workplace gossip (0.247 \*\*) and feedback seeking (0.147 \*\*), echoing Kong et al.'s call for enriching negative outcomes for i-deals [26]. Additionally, we tested the conjecture that i-dealers with nonmarginalized multi-organizational support are vulnerable to negative workplace gossip [28], as well as the performance-promoting effects of i-deals on bystanders.

To this end, we investigated the mediating role of both malicious and benign envy based on social comparison theory. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on the contrast effect of social comparison in a monadic framework of envy [34,35]. However, this framework is not suitable for complex emotions such as envy [41,62], and it is necessary to distinguish between benign and malicious forms [78]. We empirically tested Marescaux et al.'s suggestion to integrate the contrast and assimilation effects of CPOEID [42]. On the one hand, we explored the mediating role of malicious envy (indirect effect: 0.098 \*\*) in support of Hypotheses 1a, 2a, and 3, indicating that CPOEID indirectly affects negative workplace gossip through malicious envy. This contrast effect is consistent with findings from previous studies [22,34–36,43] indicating that malicious envy can lead to a form of "cold violence" behavior in the workplace [28]. Coworkers may use negative workplace gossip to damage i-dealers' reputations, weaken the performance of targets, and reduce their own feelings of inferiority. On the other hand, we found evidence to support Hypotheses 1b, 2b, and 4, suggesting that CPOEID indirectly affects feedback-seeking through the mediating role of benign envy (indirect effect: 0.050 \*). This assimilation effect echoes the findings of Lee and Duffy [44], who suggest that the positive effects of workplace envy be explored. Individuals seek feedback from i-dealers for self-improvement, either through direct inquiry or indirect observation. Our research further enriches our understanding of the antecedent variables of feedback seeking from an individual's emotional perspective [79].

More importantly, we provide empirical support for the complementarity of differential and standardized HRM practices and explore how their interaction affects em-

ployee workplace outcomes. Traditional standardized management policies carry the underlying assumption that employee competence and performance are equal and evenly distributed [17]. However, this is not the case; research from O'Boyle and Aguinis demonstrates that employees with higher levels of knowledge and use capabilities have higher performance levels [80]. As such, organizations must use targeted management policies to attract, motivate, and retain these talented employees. Previous studies have only looked at the effects of the two types of HRM practices on employee outcomes separately, without considering their interaction. To address Anand et al.'s call to examine how pervasive HRM practices can mitigate the dysfunctional outcomes of i-deals [12], we provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of management policies on employees' implicit emotions and explicit behaviors. Additionally, we examine the moderating role of developmental HRM practices and expand the boundary conditions of i-deals by combining broad organizational support for all employees with specific support for those who demonstrate talent, to assess the impact of developmental HRM practices on emotional activation.

Specifically, developmental HRM practices weaken both the effect of CPOEID on malicious envy ( $-0.077^*$ , supporting Hypothesis 5a) and the mediating effect of malicious envy between CPOEID and negative workplace gossip (indirect effect difference:  $-0.063^*$ , supporting Hypothesis 6a). The same practices also have a negative moderating effect on the relationship between CPOEID and benign envy ( $-0.105^{**}$ , rejecting Hypothesis 5b), weakening the mediating role of benign envy between CPOEID and feedback seeking (indirect effect difference:  $-0.045^*$ , rejecting Hypothesis 6b). It is possible that developmental HRM practices can contribute to the psychological well-being of employees [45,46], which could ultimately help to reduce their negative emotions. Envy is a negative emotion that may be triggered when someone compares themselves to another person who has something they desire [32,33]. Although it can act as a catalyst for self-improvement, benign envy can still be a painful emotion to experience [41,62]. Upward social comparison can have a range of effects, including both detrimental emotions like envy, and beneficial emotions like admiration [81]. Implementation of higher levels of developmental HRM practices, which provide compensation, benefits, training, and promotion, can meet the needs of most employees [12]. These adequate external supports can facilitate coworkers in understanding the investment implications of individual agreements [22], thus promoting a better understanding of the gap between coworkers and i-dealers. This understanding can lead to increased satisfaction with the support received, admiration for the expertise of i-dealers, and a reduction in distress and envy.

### 5.1. Practical Implications

Our research offers practical insights for managers when introducing differentiated HRM policies. It is essential that managers do not forsake generic HRM practices. I-deals can be a powerful tool to harness the influence of "star employees" such as i-dealers [17]. However, the negative feelings of coworkers (such as a sense of unfairness and malicious envy) can severely reduce the effectiveness of individual agreements, leading to a "lose-lose-lose" or "win-win-lose" situation [15]. Managers should strike a balance between differentiated and universal HRM practices to effectively utilize i-deals to attract, motivate, and retain talented employees [23], while also fulfilling the autonomy and achievement needs of coworkers. Envy has a small role in motivating self-improvement, but it is not necessary to sacrifice employees' mental health and workplace relationships for the sake of improving employee performance. Managers should implement developmental HRM practices in terms of diversified training, development evaluation, job design, and communicating feedback to reduce hostility and friendly rivalry caused by different HRM practices.

While dealing with coworkers, managers should weaken their malicious envy and stifle the growth of negative gossip in the workplace. The importance of i-dealers to the organization is obvious to all; managers can increase i-dealers' resources and give them rewards such as increased salaries and promotions. However, care must nevertheless be

taken to avoid exhibiting an excessive preference for i-dealers. Simultaneously, managers must improve the level of mutual understanding among team members, enhance team cohesion, and stifle the growth of negative gossip in the workplace at its source. Additionally, managers should make reasonable use of employees' benign envy and encourage them to actively seek feedback. It is unnecessary to avoid social comparisons among employees entirely [42], and managers can even motivate employees to do so in a reasonable way, such as by giving honorary rewards to i-dealers, identifying them as models for team learning, and encouraging employees to actively use i-dealers as benchmarks to improve themselves. Managers should also create a supportive feedback atmosphere, reduce employees' withdrawal due to improper inquiries, and promote feedback inquiry among employees and between employees and leaders to become an organizational norm.

More importantly, our study provides important lessons for the implementation of HRM policies to achieve the sustainable development of enterprises. Talent acquisition has become a key tool for Chinese firms to ensure long-term growth and promote innovation [82]. Unfortunately, many enterprises have historically used i-deals policies that focus solely on the development of talented employees, neglecting the reactions of coworkers, teams, and organizations and resulting in unsuccessful talent acquisition. This study examines the management effectiveness of i-deals from a bystander's perspective, encouraging enterprises to use supportive measures, such as developmental HRM practices, when implementing talent management. This maximizes the exemplary role of i-dealers and mitigates misunderstandings and rejections from bystanders, ultimately benefiting individuals (both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of i-deals), teams, and organizations by helping enterprises meet their goal of introducing talents to foster innovation.

### 5.2. Limitations and Future Research

The present study offers valuable insights and directions for future research that have meaningful implications from both theoretical and practical perspectives. However, we acknowledge the limitations of the study and suggest potential ways to address them. Specifically, although this time-lag study used supervisor–subordinate pairing to collect data, which could effectively allow us to control for endogeneity, the causal relationships within the data could not be verified. To further improve the explanatory power of the model, future research could use experimental manipulations. Additionally, this study explored the double-edged effect of CPOEID on coworkers' emotions and behaviors, and future research could enrich the results concerning interpersonal interactions further based on cognitive or motivational mechanisms. Furthermore, this study explored the envy-induced behavioral responses exhibited by coworkers, such as negative workplace gossip or feedback-seeking but did not investigate the emotional and behavioral responses of the envied persons. Future research could integrate the perspectives of both the envier and the envied to explore the strategies that the envied person could use to mitigate their own emotions and those of the envier [50]. This study investigated the moderating role of developmental HRM practices, offering empirical evidence that pervasive HRM practices can compensate for the limitations of differentiated HRM practices. Future research could further explore how strategic HRM practices, such as high-performance work systems and high-commitment work systems, interact with i-deals. Finally, given that i-dealers typically possess specialized knowledge or skills [83], there may be a transfer of tacit knowledge within the team from the recipients to the bystanders. Future research should examine the effects of i-deals on knowledge management within teams, particularly the role of i-deals in facilitating bystander knowledge acquisition and hiding behavior and the moderating impact of receiver knowledge sharing.

### 6. Conclusions

A comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of differentiated HRM policies requires an understanding not only of the positive behavior of talented employees but also of whether i-deals have a facilitating effect on the proactive behavior of coworkers and how to

prevent the negative behavior of coworkers from disrupting i-dealers. This highlights the need for a theoretical framework to explore why and how coworkers engage in beneficial or detrimental interactive behaviors. Our theoretical model outlines the double-edged response of bystanders to perceived other employees' i-deals in terms of implicit emotions and explicit interaction behaviors. While CPOEID can exacerbate coworkers' malicious envy and negative workplace gossip behaviors, it can also promote coworkers' benign envy and feedback seeking. We neither deny the managerial effects of i-deals, although they have dysfunctional outcomes, nor suggest that employee psychological well-being should be sacrificed to promote their proactive behaviors. Rather, we argue that developmental HRM practices can be effective in mitigating i-deal-induced envy, whether malicious or benign. This sheds light on the complementary relationship between differentiated and standardized HRM practices and how the integrated use of different types of management policies can enhance management efficiency and foster sustainable organizational development.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, C.D. and Z.Z.; methodology, C.D.; software, C.D.; validation, C.D. and Z.Z.; investigation, G.Z.; resources, S.Z.; data curation, C.D.; writing—original draft preparation, C.D. and Z.Z.; writing—review and editing, S.Z.; supervision, S.Z. and G.Z.; funding acquisition, S.Z. and G.Z. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The introduction of the questionnaire provided information about the purpose of this study, the social value and benefits, the scope of the information collected, potential privacy risks, and countermeasures. In addition, the signature and contact information of the researcher and research organization were included. Participants were asked to read the introduction to the questionnaire and then fill out a written informed consent form. As a result, the ethical risk of this study was low, and it was approved by Nanjing University, China, without the need for further ethical review.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Appendix A

### Coworkers' perceptions of other employees' i-deals

1. The organization promises [employee A] a level of pay that most employees in the department do not receive.
2. The organization promises [employee A] advancement opportunities that most employees in the department do not receive.
3. The organization promises [employee A] skill training that most employees in the department do not receive.
4. The organization promises [employee A] career development opportunities that most employees in the department do not receive.
5. The organization promises [employee A] a level of job security that most employees in the department do not receive.
6. The organization promises [employee A] support for personal problems that most employees in the department do not receive.

### Benign envy

1. I want to work harder to accomplish the same achievements as [employee A].
2. I feel a deep longing for the same achievements as [employee A].

3. I devised a plan to obtain the same achievements as [employee A].
4. [Employee A] motivates me to become just like him or her.

#### Malicious envy

1. I have complained about [employee A] to someone else.
2. I feel hostile towards [employee A].
3. I secretly wish that [employee A] would lose i-deals.
4. I feel hatred towards [employee A].

#### Feedback seeking

1. I often take the initiative to ask [employee A] for information regarding overall job performance.
2. I often take the initiative to ask [employee A] for information regarding technical aspects of the job.
3. I often take the initiative to ask [employee A] for information regarding the values and attitudes of the firm.
4. I often take the initiative to ask [employee A] for information regarding role expectations.
5. I often take the initiative to ask [employee A] for information regarding social behaviors.

#### Negative workplace gossip

Do you approve of the behavior of a coworker on your team when he or she exhibits the following behavior?

1. Some coworkers on the team deliberately spread unfavorable gossip about [employee A].
2. Some coworkers on the team deliberately made negative allegations about [employee A].
3. Some coworkers on the team deliberately communicated damaging information about [employee A].

#### Developmental human resource management practices

1. The organization fully understands the training needs of its employees.
2. The training provided by the organization meets the job needs of its employees.
3. The organization provides training on stress and emotion management for employees.
4. The organization provides training on culture and values for employees.
5. The organization provides training on job-based technical competence and knowledge for employees.
6. The organization includes the teamwork of employees in the assessment.
7. The organization includes the growth rate of employees in the assessment.
8. The organization includes the innovation abilities of employees in the assessment.
9. The organization includes the challenge spirit of employees in the assessment.
10. The organization includes the potential level of employees in the assessment.
11. The organization encourages employees to actively participate in the discussion of work issues.
12. The organization gives employees a certain degree of autonomy.
13. The organization encourages employees to exchange information and share experiences.
14. The organizations provide employees with a variety of job opportunities.
15. The organization gives full consideration to the work-life balance of its employees.
16. The organization respects employees' right to speak and encourages them to express their opinions fully.
17. Employee comments can be addressed quickly and effectively within the organization.
18. Smooth communication channels have been established within the organization.

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