



The Relationship between Social and Psychological Capitals on Well-being among Saudi Employees

M. M. Sulphey^{1*}

¹Department of Human Resource Management, College of Business Administration, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, SAUDI ARABIA.

*Corresponding Author (Email: s.manakkattil@psau.edu.sa).

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Abstract

Workplace well-being (WWB) helps employees perform better and cope reasonably well with stress. It is capable of influencing the financial performance and success of organizations. Various positive psychology constructs have been identified to impact WWB. The present study examined whether psychological capital and social capital are related to WWB. Data for the study was collected from a sample of 395 gainfully employed samples, using three standardized questionnaires. Results of the study show that psychological and social capitals are related to WWB. The present study is the first of its kind in Saudi Arabia. The results of the study have both theoretical and practical implications. It is hoped that the study would motivate further studies in this exciting area.

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1 Introduction

Workplace well-being (WWB) is accorded utmost importance both by employees and employers due to its massive benefits (Chawla and Sharma, 2019; Lups et al., 2019). WWB is the general feeling about happiness and pleasure (Lee, Singhapakdi, and Sirgy, 2007), vital for employee health, behaviour, organizational performance (Kun and Gadanez, 2019; Page and Vella-Brodrick 2009). Evidence shows that WWB and happiness are beneficial for organizations (Seligman, 2002). Employees with higher WWB perform better, cope reasonably well with stress

(Wood and Joseph, 2010), and are satisfied with positive workplace relationships (Boehm and Lyubomirsky 2008). They have better self-control, are cooperative, and are prosocial (Chida and Steptoe 2008; Segerstrom, 2007). Lack of WWB could result in severe employee stress and resultant burnout (Iverson et al., 1998). It could lead to employee turnover (Sandhya and Sulphrey, 2019).

WWB is a broad construct that encompasses affective, cognitive, and behavioural facets (Ryff and Keyes 1995; Seligman 2011). The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of Ryan and Deci (2000) is closely associated with WWB. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), who postulated the theory, when the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled, it fosters well-being at the workplace. Some aspects that influence WWB include income, demographics, social beingness and relationships, attitudes and beliefs, and the broader socio-economic and political environment (Dolan et al. 2008). Various other aspects are also found related to employee well-being (Nielsen et al., 2017). A few of them include self-regulation (Baumeister and Vohs 2003), resilience (Reivich et al. 2011), work-life balance (Lomas, 2019), and leadership; rewards, recognition (Parker et al. 2003). Others include emotional intelligence (EI) (Salovey and Mayer 1990), resilience (Reivich et al. 2011). psychological capital (PsyCap) (Luthans et al., 2007). mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn 2003), meaning at work (Steger et al., 2012), and work identities (Dutton et al., 2010).

The study's objective is to determine PsyCap and Sociological capital's relationship to workplace well-being among Saudi Arabian Employees. A literature review shows that no such study was undertaken in Saudi Arabia, and most of the literature has emanated from the western world. The present study intends to fill this gap in the literature.

2 Literature review

2.1 Social capital

Workplaces are social organizations with ample social capital. Social relations that exist in organizations are the antecedents of social capital. According to Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), organizations can foster social capital by bringing people together towards constant interactions (Milana and Maldaon, 2015). These interactions, in turn, provide organizations with performance advantages. There is now considerable empirical interest to know about the influence of social capital on organizational performance (AlKahtani et al., 2021; Ben Hador, 2017). According to Putnam (2000), social capital is a feature of any social organization, including constructs like the trust of individuals, norms within organizations, and networks created among themselves. The concerted and coordinated action of all these could help in improving efficiency (Ben Hador, 2017). There is now a realization that social capital, like all other types of capital, is a long-term asset that can be invested to obtain a potential flow of benefits for the organization (Adler and Kwon, 2002).

Some social scientists consider social capital to be an elusive construct. Due to this, consensus eludes its conceptualization (Sato, 2013). The definitions of social capital are varied. For

instance, Bourdieu (1986, pp. 51) defined social capital as: “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”.

Focusing on the resource aspect, Lin (2001, pp. 29) defined it as “resources embedded in a social structure that is accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions”. Chazon (2009) also focuses on resources and states that social capital is the social experiences that arise from strong relational relations, with the resources of increased confidence and cooperation as a result. According to Burt (1992), social capital involves friends, colleagues, and those others who obtain opportunities to utilize the financial and human capital.

Adler and Kwon (2002) identified social capital as “appropriable and convertible”. It is appropriable since an individual’s network can be utilized for various purposes like data collection or consultation. It is also convertible to other forms of capital. For instance, it is possible to convert the benefits derived from an individual’s social network to economic advantage. Social capital is capable of being a substitute or complementary to other resources. Organizations can use social capital to help compensate for the lack of financial or human resources by utilizing members’ unique relationships and connections. It can also complement other capital forms. For instance, it could help improve the efficiency of economic capital by lowering transaction costs.

There are other multiple advantages of social capital (Karahanna and Preston, 2013; Milana and Maldaon, 2015). Prominent among them is that it promotes information integration by reducing the organizational perception that other members might behave opportunistically, facilitating the development of a set of common objectives for various stakeholders (Karahanna and Preston, 2013). It provides the required social trust, which facilitates synergy among social members (Putnam, 1995). It aids organizations in their adaptability to integrating environmental changes that affect business operations (Chazon, 2009). Biddle et al. (2009) found social capital to be a resource that could draw on and feed specific other resources like natural, economic, and human capital.

2.2 Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

Despite its newness, the concept of PsyCap has sparked a lot of empirical and academic interest (Grover et al., 2018; Luthans et al., 2014). PsyCap is a higher-order construct having a positive psychological state. Luthans et al. (2007, p. 550) defined PsyCap as the “positive appraisal of circumstances and probability for success based on motivated effort and perseverance”. It has four overlapping components (Luthans and Youssef, 2004); the details are provided in Table 1.

Studies, for instance, AlKahtani et al. (2020); Luthans et al. (2006); Luthans et al. (2007), identified PsyCap as a critical psychological resource capable of yielding extensive returns. It positively impacts and influences the different critical and essential workplace attitudes and behaviors (AlKahtani et al., 2021; Choi and Lee, 2014). Some such attitudes and behaviours that PsyCap can influence motivation, commitment, social capital, leadership, organization citizenship

behaviour, engagement, and so on (AlKahrani et al., 2021; Gupta and Singh, 2014; Hodges, 2010; Simons and Buitendach, 2013; Soni and Rastogi, 2019). It also induces innovation and creativity (Abbas and Raja, 2011; Sweetman et al., 2011).

Table 1: Components of PsyCap

No.	Components	Details
1	Hope	The “positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (Snyder et al., 1991, p. 287).
2	Efficacy	The “employee's conviction or confidence about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, or courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context.” (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998, p. 66).
3	Optimism	A “positive outcome outlook or attribution of events, which includes positive emotions and motivation and has the caveat of being realistic” (Luthans, 2002 p. 702).
4	Resilience	The "positive psychological capacity to rebound, to 'bounce back' from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change, progress, and increased responsibility" (Luthans, 2002, p. 702).

2.3 Workplace Well-being

Employees' mental health and well-being are critical to an organization's performance and growth (Page and Vella-Brodrick 2009). Modern businesses that value employee and workplace well-being as a core value are more likely to prosper (Zwetsloot and Pot, 2004). Pollard and Davidson (2001, p.19) defined it as: “a state of successful performance across the life course integrating physical, cognitive and social-emotional function.”

The Job-Demands Resources Model propounded by Demerouti et al. (2001) conceptualized workplace well-being as a “function of the trade-offs between demands and resources”. Many individual, group, and organizational resources are closely related to well-being (Nielsen et al., 2017). There are a variety of work-related ‘drivers’ that help or hinder well-being (Lomas, 2019).

Workplace wellness promotes broad social relationships, reduces stress and burnout, and increases self and coping skills and prosocial behavior (Chida and Steptoe 2008; Howell et al. 2007; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; Segerstrom 2007). It could result in job satisfaction (Boehm and Lyubomirsky 2008; Crede et al. 2007; Fisher 2010), engagement (Bakker and Schaufeli 2008), and work-life balance (Lomas, 2019). It also could lead to meaning in work (Steger et al., 2012), improve work-related values (Persson et al., 2001), facilitate cognitive and moral development (Rogoff, 1990), aid in performance enhancement (Wood and Joseph, 2010), and reduce the susceptibility to burnout (Iverson et al. 1998). Kun & Gadancz (2019) found workplace well-being to be related to Psycap.

3 Methodology

The research was done among gainfully employed individuals in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaires for the research were chosen based on a detailed literature review. A brief description of the questionnaires is provided below:

- a. **Social capital:** To measure workplace social capital, a questionnaire developed by Firouzbakht et al. (2018) was used. The questionnaire had eight items on a five-point scale. The minimum and maximum possible scores were 8 and 40, respectively.
- b. **PsyCap:** Psychological capital was measured using the PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ 12) (Luthans et al., 2007). The questionnaire has four dimensions on a five-point scale. The questionnaire has a total of 12 items, spread out as –Efficacy (three), Hope (four), Resilience (three), and Optimism (two). The minimum score was 12 and the maximum was 60.
- c. **Workplace well-being:** To measure Workplace well-being, the questionnaire developed by Bartels et al. (2019) was used. The questionnaire measures workplace well-being against two factors. This is an eight-item scale on a five-point scale. The two factors are Intrapersonal and Interpersonal well-being.

There was also a demographic section, which elicited information like gender, age, and experience. The questionnaires were uploaded to Google docs, and the link was posted to a few social media groups where the prospective respondents were members. Data were collected only from gainfully employed persons. No distinction was made between public and private sector employees while collecting data.

4 Sample

A total of 395 samples were received, which can be considered adequate based on the stipulation of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). According to them, sample adequacy could be assumed with a representative sample of 384 for a population of one million. The sample collected for the present study is well above the stipulated 384. The sample included 176 and 219 males and females, respectively. There was a wide variation in the respondent’s ages. It ranged between 19 and 61 years. The average age was 41 years.

4.1 Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaires used for the study was examined using Cronbach Alpha. The details are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Alpha values of the variables

No	Variable	Items	Alpha
1	Social capital	12	0.891
2	PsyCap	8	0.782
3	Workplace wellbeing	8	0.859

The alphas of all variables in the sample satisfy Nunnally and Bernstein's (1994) stipulations (0.700), as shown in the table. This shows that the questionnaires are reliable.

5 Results

The mean values of each variable are PsyCap – 51.709, Workplace social capital – 31.957, and Wellbeing – 34.808. The standard deviations are PsyCap – 5.251, Workplace social capital – 5.811, and Wellbeing – 4.288.

Correlation and regression analyses were done to determine the contribution of social and psychological capital to employee well-being. Pearson correlation showed a significant correlation at 0.01 level between the three variables. It can be observed from Table 2 that the r values are reasonably high, indicating strong correlations between the variables. The relationship of the variables with the demographics was also assessed. It can be found that other than PsyCap, no significant correlation was found with the respondents' demographic variables like age and experience. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of correlation

	PsyCap	Social Capital	Workplace well-being	Age (in years)	Experience (in years)
Psychological Capital	1	.483**	.510**	.133**	.138**
Workplace Social capital		1	.667**	.091	.058
Workplace well-being			1	.063	.062
Age (in years)				1	.588**
Experience (in years)					1

Note: ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

N = 395

A full model regression analysis was conducted by taking workplace well-being as a dependent variable and PsyCap and Social capital as independent variables. Tables 4 and 5 present the results of the full model regression of workplace well-being with the psychological and sociological contracts.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.700	.490	.488	3.0690	1.796

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace social capatial, PsyCap
b. Dependent Variable: Workplace wellbeing

Table 5: Regression results

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	11.526	1.536		7.504	.000
	PsyCap	.200	.034	.245	5.957	.000
	WSC	.405	.030	.548	13.318	.000

N = 395; R² = .490; F = 188.629; Significance = 0.00

The results indicated that 49% of the variation in employee well-being is explained by PsyCap and Sociological capital (the independent variables). The significance examined using the ANOVA technique revealed that the F statistic value was 188.629, which is significant at the 0.00 level. This result shows the adequacy of the regression model. For one unit increase in psychological contract, workplace well-being increases by 0.200 units, and for one unit increase in

workplace social capital, workplace well-being increases by 0.405 units; when the other variables are constant. The study thus provides the relationship between the constructs identified for the study. The results are in expected lines and with similar earlier studies.

6 Conclusion

Though globalization opened the floodgates of organizational behavioural research in multi-culturally backgrounds, limited empirical evidence exists in this area in the KSA. The present study was set against this backdrop. The study's main objective was to determine whether Psycap and Sociological capitals are related to workplace well-being among Saudi Arabian Employees. The study has shown a significant positive relationship between the constructs. The findings are partially in tune with AlKahthani et al. (2020, 2021) and Soni and Rastogi (2019). The study also substantiates Kun and Gadanez's (2019) findings that workplace well-being is correlated with PsyCap. The importance of social capital in bringing happiness and better performance was found by Lomas (2019). The study suggests that multiple factors substantially influence workplace well-being.

The study's findings have practical significance as evidence suggests that workplace well-being is beneficial for organizations (Seligman 2002). It influences performance and helps employees to cope with stress (Wood and Joseph, 2010). Further, lack of well-being could lead to burnout (Iverson et al., 1998) and turnover (Sandhya and Sulphey, 2021). Organizations must focus on employee touchpoints at different stages of the employee life cycle that could contribute toward good relations. Psychological and Social capitals are such employee touchpoints. The study has shown that these two capitals are positively related to workplace well-being. This finding calls for the company management to give due and adequate care to enhance the two indispensable capitals. They could also identify possible intervention techniques to improve workplace well-being and happiness. Empirical evidence exists to prove that enhancing well-being through intervention has multiple positive effects on the workplace (Kun and Gadanez, 2019). The present study's findings that PsyCap and Social capital are related to workplace well-being could help identify the required interventions by company management and social scientists. The study's findings could help managers make their organizations effective and productive by giving due importance to positive psychology. The study, it is expected, could also trigger further empirical examinations in the areas of psychological and social capital and well-being. Further studies could be undertaken to identify the causal factors that lead to enhanced psychological and social capital.

It is also required to identify the limitations of the study. The data for the study was collected from Saudi employees, and therefore, the results can be generalized only through comparative studies from other populations. It is also a limitation that all the constructs were measured with self-reported questionnaires, and causal relationships were not under the purview of the current research. Future studies could consider these points.

7 Availability of Data and Material

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding author.

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Dr. Sulphey M M is a Professor with the Department of Business Administration, College of Business Administration, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, AlKharj, Saudi Arabia. His research interests are in the areas of Organizational Behaviour/ Human Resource Management, Sustainability.
