

Research Article

Psychological Capital and Sustainable Employee Performance in Hospitality: The Mediating Role of Well-Being and the Moderating Role of Digital-Hybrid Work

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Abstract: Hospitality business is highly personalized towards customers and emotional labor, uneven shifts, and the growing digitalization of which imposes enormous mental strain on staff. Hybrid and digitally supported working patterns, especially in work as a supervisor, manager, and assistant, have also been installed in the industry over the last few years. In the theoretical framework presented, applying Positive Organizational Behavior and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, displaying Jobs Demands-Resources (JD-R) conceptual framework, the theoretical paper uses an integrative framework explaining how the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) that constitutes hope, self-efficacy, and resilience and optimism can cause employees in the hospitality industry to be more effective through the employee well-being as a modifying influence. Besides, the conceptualization of hospitality-specific and work-specific characteristics, including autonomy, digital intensity, and work isolation as moderators are introduced into the paper as the aspects that form the power of these relationships. This paper states the thesis that PsyCap is among the most relevant person-level resources enabling employees in the hospitality industry to ensure well-being and deliver the finest performance based on task-oriented performance, contextual performance, and creative performance in more complex and digitally mediated service environments with the synthesis of the empirical evidence available between 2015 and 2025. The paper also contributes to the theory of hospitality management, as it strives to integrate the perspectives of psychological resources and the prevailing realities of service work in the context of hospitality organizations, which are keen on achieving sustainable performance outcomes.

Keywords: Psychological Capital, Employee Well-Being, Hospitality Employees, Hybrid Work, Service Performance, Creative Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality is a psychologically intensive field of work because it involves emotional work, constant contact with customers, abnormal working schedules, and a high-quality level of demanded services (Karatepe, 2015; Karatepe and Olugbade, 2017; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2021). The individuals in hospitality organizations and hotel services need to identify feelings and maintain positive affect, as well as deliver good services, irrespective of the stress witnessed in their workplace and responsibilities (Grandey and Melloy, 2017; Wong et al., 2023). However, in all situations, it has been established using empirical data that they expose a hospitality employee to a higher risk of emotional burnout, ill health, and poor job performance (Karatepe, 2015; Lee et al., 2021; Zopiatis et al., 2023). All of the issues have now been further magnified in the context of the post-pandemic hospitality environment, where labor shortages, increased workloads for workers, the digitalization of the service process, and increased confusion about professional insecurity have become constant (Baum et al., 2023; Karatepe et al., 2024). To respond to this, the whole research in hospitality has increasingly been directed to work relating to positive organizational psychology in the process of explaining how personal psychological resources can allow the worker to

stay in a healthy condition and performance despite the stressful service conditions (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Bakker and Demerouti, 2018). One of these resources is Psychological Capital (PsyCap), comprising hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism as a resource, which has lately gained significant topicality in the hotel industry as a service employee (Avey et al., 2011; Karatepe and Karadas, 2015; Gupta et al., 2021). The study aims to address questions such as how similar is the effect of the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on task, contextual, and creative attainment; how employee well-being confounds the effects of Psychological Capital (PsyCap), how hybrid and distance work strategies mediate the links between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and performance; how the insights of Positive Organizational Behavior, Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model can be combined; and what management actionable implications can be obtained in relation to the hospital

Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Conservation of Resources Theory.

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory presupposes that individuals are trying to acquire, maintain, and protect precious resources (of material and psychological nature)

to address stress, as well as work agenda (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The emotional and mental stress experienced by hospitality workers occurs repeatedly because they are directly in contact with the customers and have to meet unpredictable work pressures, as well as provide services (Karatepe, 2015; Zopiatis et al., 2023). Such requirements may be overwhelming for an individual, leading to emotional burnout and fatigue, and poor performance. The given scenario involves having an essential personal resource, namely, psychological capital (PsyCap), the set of which comprises:

Hope: Advancing and designing goal achievement despite service failure. **Self-efficacy:** The conviction of the ability to accomplish the work and cope with the customers successfully. **Resilience:** The capacity to recover quickly after failures, mistakes, and a high level of stress experience. **Optimism:** An outlook on recent and future outcomes of work. The COR theory states that the highest PsyCap employees tend to stay resourceful, both emotionally, cognitively, and socially, and thus manage to maintain their well-being and their performance in the highly pressured hospitality atmosphere (Avey et al., 2011; Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Karape and Karadas (2015) found that those employees who possessed more PsyCap in the hotel experienced less emotional exhaustion and more job satisfaction. They established that the positive impacts of stress on work engagement and proactive service behaviors in the hospitality workers were mediated by PsyCap (Gupta et al., 2021). According to the observations made by Sumalrot et al. (2023), the effectiveness of the PsyCap web-driven intervention in improving the quality of life of tourism employees works effectively, even in a high-stress environment.

Proposition (P1): The greater PsyCap of the hospitality employees, the higher the chances of them behaving psychologically well under the conditions of high job stress.

Proposition 2 (P 2): High PsyCap levels decrease the adverse effect of workload and emotional work on the worker's well-being.

2.2 Hospitality Job Demands- Resources Model

Within the JD-R framework, Psychological Capital is placed as a fundamental personal resource; the influence on employee well-being and performance is not independent of the work situation but rather triggered, reinforced, or inhibited by job demands and job resources. Therefore, PsyCap is not an alternative to job resources; it increases the ability of employees to exploit the available resources and mitigate job demands.

The requirements in the hospitality industry revolve around high emotional labor (e.g., controlling the emotions of customers and a choice to stay positive) and the intensity of the working load. On the other side, job resources such as autonomy, supportive leadership, and PsyCap provide the employees with coping mechanisms, engagement, and creativity (Karatepe and Olugbade, 2017; Huertas-Valdivia

et al., 2021). The higher PsyCap employees are, the more they can convert these job resources into engagement, resilience, and creativity, especially in the conditions of high demands (Karatepe and Olugbade, 2017; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2021). Wang et al. (2023) established that PsyCap mediates the relationship between emotional needs and creative outcomes of the employees in the hotel sector. As Karatepe and Olugbade (2017) disclosed, the personal resources (PsyCap) positively influence the outcomes of service recovery performance in the case of high-demand circumstances. It was noted that Poly-Empowering and PsyCap help to increase the resilience and well-being of the hotel industry employees (Li et al., 2024). Based on these, job demands are supposed to enhance the protective effect of PsyCap, where PsyCap will be increasingly salient to maintain well-being and performance as job demands are elevated in accordance with the COR theory and JD-R assumptions.

Proposition 3 (P3): Job resources positively affect employee engagement and creative performance in the hospitality setting and are improved by personal resources (PsyCap).

Proposition 4 (P4): Job demands and resources interaction mediates the interaction between job PsyCap employee performance relationship, in that high job demands strengthen the protective nature of PsyCap.

2.3 Positive Organizational Behavior

Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) is concerned with the benefit of psychologically valuable psychic forces that are measurable and those that can be trained (Luthans, 2002; Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017). The paramount construct within POB is PsyCap because it is similar to the state, i.e., it can be trained by the interventions of training, coaching, and, of course, in the supportive work practices. According to Avey et al. (2011), PsyCap interventions were found to succeed in the promotion of the performance and well-being of employees in the long-term. In hospitality, Karatepe and Karadas (2015) have proven that the quality of services established by employees and their participation was improved through the introduction of hope, resilience, and optimism interventions.

Proposition 5 (P5): PsyCap is a type of state psychological resource that may be trained through organizational interventions, in order to enhance the well-being and performance of hospitality employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The psychological capital within the hospitality industry

High emotional and interpersonal requirements of the hospitality industry and, consequently, the significance of Psychological Capital as one of the most crucial predictors of well-being and performance (Karatepe and Karadas, 2015; Gupta et al., 2021). Each PsyCap dimension is involved in appropriate service bending in its own way: hope enables employees to work on objectives even after the failure or adverse customer interactions, self-efficacy

enables one to feel confident about working with complex assignments and complaints, resilience enables recovery after failure or failure, and optimism promotes proactive behaviours and positive attitude towards the services (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020). The studies indicate that the better the employees are adapted to the post-pandemic discontinuities, technological change, and hybrid working environment, the better the performance and engagement levels are ensured (Baum et al., 2023; Karatepe et al., 2024).

Proposition (P6): PsyCap is positively related to task, contextual, and creative performance of hospitality workers at advanced levels.

3.2 Well-Being in Hospitality Workers

The operationalized notion of employee well-being as the composite (holistic) state of operating concept (sensory, i.e., job satisfaction, positive affect, hedonic) and eudaimonic (meaning-based, i.e., psychological functioning, personal growth) dimensions is a key mediator of PsyCap in the performance outcomes of the hospitality industry (Diener et al., 2018; Guest, 2017). Empirical research evidence supports the claim that the growth in well-being is correlated with positively related better service quality, contextual engagement, and creative problem-solving; lower well-being results in withdrawal behaviour, emotional depletion, and customer de-orientation (Lupsa et al., 2020; Lee et al.), and less contextual engagement and customer orientation (Zopiatis et al., 2023). PsyCap will help to ensure improved well-being, as it will enable employees to handle their emotions in a more efficient manner, remain motivated, and get rid of the stress factors of the service (Gupta et al., 2021; Karatepe et al., 2024).

Proposition 7 (P7): PsyCap has an indirect relationship with task creativity, contextual, and creative performance through employee well-being.

3.3 Employee Performance

The multi-dimensionality of employee performance in hospitality is merely the outcome of high-intensity services that are offered in the industry. The successful fulfilment of the primary job tasks, such as the efficiency of the check-in/check-out system or delivery of food services is called task performance, the non-planned additional performance as a helper to a colleague in need or proactive towards the customer is the contextual performance, and the innovation to find a solution to the problem that appears unexpectedly is the creative performance (Bakker and Demerouti, 2018; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2021). As it has also been shown, PsyCap was shown to have a positive predictive ability regarding all three dimensions, such as resilience and optimism, in predicting creative behaviors, although hope and self-efficacy more positively predicted task

performance and contextual performance (Karatepe and Karadas, 2015; Gupta et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023).

Proposition 8 (P8): PsyCap positively affects all of the dimensions of employee performance, such as task, contextual, and creative performance in the hospitality settings.

3.4 Moderating Factors within Hospitality

Moderating factors also influence these relations in the hospitality industry. Emotional labor may support the positive influence of high PsyCap since it is the effort allocated to the expression of emotionally desirable emotions during the process of interaction with customers, and employees with more resources at their disposal can absorb affective dissonance more (Grandey and Melloy, 2017). The level of autonomy or the extent of employees to possess discretion over their labor allows examining how PsyCap is applied to managing problems other than living and working in an unhealthy environment (Bakker and Demerouti, 2018; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2021). Neither hybrid work arrangements nor digitally enabled work arrangements are direct predictors of performance, but they precondition the degree to which PsyCap can be mobilized. Whereas the environment is conducive, and the hybrid technologies are well-designed, PsyCap will be more likely to stimulate well-being, interest, and productivity, but poorly-designed digital work can deteriorate such relationships (Apenbrink and Kuhlmann, 2025; Wang et al., 2023). Together, PsyCap turns out to be a fundamental resource in the hospitality industry, and the well-being of the employees is an intermediate phenomenon; situational forces such as emotional labor, autonomy, and working hybridly become moderators. The framework provides a complex view of the motivation of sustainable performance in high-demand service organizations that includes COR theory, knowledge of the JD-R model, and the POB.

Proposition 9 (P9): PsyCap-well-being-performance association deals with autonomous work, emotional work, and hybrid/digital work conditions.

3.5 Integrative Perspective

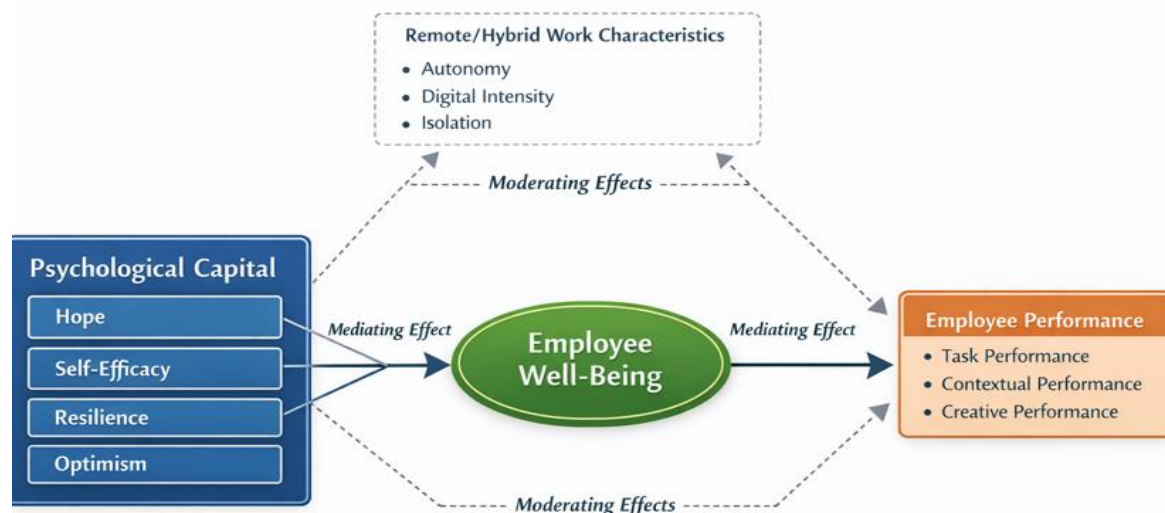
Combining the literature, it comes out that Psychological Capital is a fundamental personal resource, well-being of employees is a mediating variable, and emotional labour, autonomy, and hybrid work are situational variables that moderate the associations. This model points out that PsyCap ought to be constructed through the interpretation of using interventions, training, and enabling organizational practices to sustain high-performance of task, contextual, or creative performance in hospitality. Further, it also identifies that employee well-being is not merely an outcome but also one of the most important channels through which PsyCap is converted into behaviourally meaningful to an organization.

4. Conceptual Framework

In the proposed framework, employee well-being is a mediating variable in the relationship between Psychological Capital and task, contextual, and creative performance, and emotional labor, autonomy, and hybrid/digital work conditions are moderating variables that either reinforce or attenuate the relationships. The difference conceptually guarantees the dissimilarity between

explanatory processes (mediation) and boundary conditions (moderation).

Figure 1



DISCUSSION

The discussion supports the fact that PsyCap is a key personal resource that helps hospitality staff to deal with excessive job demands. Notably, PsyCap depends on situational issues and its effectiveness, similar to those of JD-R and COR perspectives, and the fact that psychological resources are most effective in situations where they are coupled with conducive job resources and flexible work designs. Along with task and contextual performance, PsyCap also enhances creative performance, which every employee requires as a tool for addressing customer needs with confidence amid uncertainty and navigating processes that are often unpredictable (Karatepe and Karadas, 2015; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2021).

One of the mediating processes identified as important between PsyCap and performance outcomes is the health of the employees. Both hedonic (job satisfaction, positive affect) and eudaimonic (meaning, personal growth, psychological functioning) can be discussed as well-being dimensions; in accordance with them, employees will be able to be engaged and be proactively oriented toward activities. Empirical research has put forward the suggestion that an increased PsyCap is positively associated with hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, which ultimately will reflect itself in a superior performance in all its aspects (task, contextual, and creative) (Lupsa et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021; Zopiatis et al., 2023). To illustrate, better PsyCap among employees in a hotel means that they can be more consistent about their service, encouraging, and creative in offering solutions to the service breakdown, which is mediated by the promotion of well-being.

PsyCap relies on its circumstances. Emotional labor can improve the positive contribution of PsyCap to well-being and performance, and in such a case, emotional work can be defined as the effort required in terms of controlling emotions according to the organizational standards. When

an employee with a High-PsyCap can handle emotional dissonance more effectively, the results of long-term interest and quality service can be realized (Grandey and Melloy, 2017; Wong et al., 2023). PsyCap can be implemented in innovative and proactive behavior applied in well-being and creative performance with the use of autonomy or the degree of discretion that employees have in their choice of the conduct of work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2018; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2021). Also, personal resources mobilized in different work settings through the interaction of digital and hybrid work arrangements generate the nature of PsyCap influence, as well as involvement in work settings (Apenbrink and Kuhlmann, 2025; Wang et al., 2023). As an example, PsyCap can be utilized more effectively by the workers who work in amicable hybrid environments. The discussion reinforces hereby causing the growth of well-being and multi-dimensional performance.

Gathered together, this review demonstrates a clear trend along which the employees feel better, and this aspect results in a rise in the performance of the tasks, situations, and innovations. This pathway is mediated by emotional labor, autonomy, and hybrid/digital work factors, which are the situational and contextual factors that mediate this process. This integrative method combines the expertise of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, and Positive Organizational Behavior (POB), which are great theories describing how to exploit psychological resources to accomplish high-level performance within a high-demand hospitality environment.

7. Implications

7.1 Theoretical Implications

In this conceptual paper, there are a number of key contributions that are made to the literature of hospitality and organizational psychology. First, it brings into the

limelight the role of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) in promoting multi-dimensional employee performance, which includes task, contextual, and creative performance. Although many previous studies have mainly examined task and contextual performances, the consideration of creative performance is one of the essential gaps in the study of hospitality and a measure of the increasing significance of innovation and adaptation in the service environment (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023). Second, the framework puts the well-being of the employees in its place as one of the central mediating processes between PsyCap and performance outcomes. The model allows the link between personal psychological resources and sustained performance by incorporating both hedonic and eudaimonic notions of well-being, which provides support to the PsyCap-performance mediation logic (P3) as well as expands the previous evidence stating that well-being is a critical psychological pathway and not a result of performance (Lupsa et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021). Third, the article presents job and organizational-specific moderators such as emotional labor, autonomy, and hybrid/digital work design, which proves that the efficiency of PsyCap is conditional on job and organizational circumstances. In line with Propositions 4-6 (P4-P6), high PsyCap employees enjoy greater well-being and performance provisions in conducive work settings in terms of independence and working flexibility (Grandey and Melloy, 2017; Apenbrink and Kuhlmann, 2025). The framework is based on the Conservation of Resources theory, the JD-R model, and the Positive Organizational Behavior perspective, and provides a comprehensive overview of factors that contribute to employee performance in highly stressful hospitality work settings, through their joint action between personal and job resources.

7.2 Managerial Implications

The results provide effective tips that would be used by hospitality managers who are aiming at maintaining staff performance in complicated service settings. The organizations can invest in PsyCap development programs, including training, coaching, and digital interventions that are strengthening hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism to boost employee well-being and multi-dimensional performance (Luthans and Yousef-Morgan, 2017; Karatepe and Karadas, 2015; Sumalrot et al., 2023). The well-being of employees must be considered a strategic asset with the help of psychological support, work-life balance program, recognition scheme, and mental health program, as it acts as a mediator between PsyCap-performance (Gupta et al., 2021; Zopiatis et al., 2023). Furthermore, the work systems, which should be hybrid and digitally enabled, should facilitate interaction, social relations, and access to resources, so that PsyCap could effectively be applied in the work settings (Apenbrink and Kuhlmann, 2025; Wang et al., 2023). Lastly, harmonizing HR policies and performance management systems against the PsyCap- well-being-performance paradigm can be useful in ensuring that hospitality organizations have a sound workforce that produces reliable, quality, and innovative service in the face of continual operation and

emotional pressure.

8. Limitations and Future Recommendations

This is a conceptual paper that has a number of shortcomings. It is majorly theoretical, therefore combining already existing knowledge, but not under experimental consideration, and therefore the PsyCap - Well-Being - Task, Contextual and Creative Performance pathways, as proposed, have to undergo confirmation in real-world hospitality establishments. The sample that was centered on the hospitality industry and three mods (emotional labor, autonomy, and hybrid/digital work) might not be generalizable as other industries, cultural contexts, and organizational conditions (e.g., leadership, work, culture) might also affect PsyCap effectiveness. Moreover, the model fails to measure how psychological resources and performance change with time.

Future studies are expected to empirically test the framework in quantitative, qualitative, and longitudinal research and should examine more mediators and moderators, including engagement, psychological empowerment, and job crafting, and test cross-sector and cross-cultural applicability. The effects of PsyCap development programs on employee well-being and multi-dimensional performance may be evaluated in intervention-based studies; however, the research on the hybrid and digitally enabled working environment might shed some light on the context-specific factors. Theory and practice can also be made to meet by focusing on organizational practices that can enhance PsyCap and well-being to enhance sustainable performance of the employees in the hospitality industry.

CONCLUSION

The high-demand service nature of the hospitality sector implies that particular attention should be paid to the personal psychological resources as the source of sustainable performance. The results of this theoretical synthesis highlight the fact that PsyCap cannot be applied in a vacuum; on the contrary, its effectiveness is contingent on hospitality-specific work features, such as the intensity of emotional labor, autonomy, and hybrid/digital work arrangements, as well as the boundaries of the conceptualization of the concept. This work proves that the contextual processes of PsyCap interaction, like autonomy, emotional labor, and hybrid work/digital factors, are mediated by hospitality-specific contextual factors, meaning that there are boundary conditions of PsyCap effectiveness. With the combination of empirical data from 2015-2025, this paper offers a conceptual framework on a broad scope that encompasses the PsyCap - Well-Being - Performance pathway, with the moderators included. To support the propositions, future empirical studies must apply this combined model in different hospitality settings, such as the post-pandemic working conditions, hybrid work systems, and different service levels. Such research studies will provide useful recommendations for theory-making and practical application to assist organizations in creating psychologically strong, participative, and high-performing hospitality employees. This framework is useful in both

theoretical and practical ways, and it can serve as a guide toward the optimization of personal and contextual resources management that will allow reaching sustainable results in performance and promote employee well-being in complicated service environments.

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