

WELL BEING AT WORK: WHAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE?

Aiste Dirzyte, PhD, Assoc. Prof.
Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

Abstract

The article analyses current research trends on psychological constructs related to well being at work. Right around the turn of the last century, the field of psychology began to place greater importance on investigation what contributes to human flourishing, however, positive approach is still developing, and evidence on relationship between positive constructs has not been grounded culturally yet. This paper presents some results of the survey (n=197) which was conducted in Lithuania. It aimed to identify psychological factors that were found to be related to well being at work: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, psychological capital, personality traits, constructive thinking. This study confirmed that job satisfaction, organizational commitment and positive psychological capital are related constructs, and this Lithuanian research complements the previous studies done in various countries. The study has also demonstrated some statistically significant relations between personality traits and constructive thinking in Lithuanian organizations.

Keywords: Well being, psychological capital

Introduction:

Although the importance of well being at work has been given attention through the years, only recently it has been proposed as a new standpoint for organizational behavior research (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007.) For many decades researchers have been exploring the factors contributing to well being at work, but the results varied across the different cultures and economic systems (Suki, 2011). Recent research has revealed universal factors that can be applied to any given organizational and cultural context. This implies employees' psychological capital, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and personality traits of leaders (Garg and Rastogi, 2009; Kumar and Giri, 2009; Narimawati, 2007; Tayyab, 2006; Meyer et al., 2008). These new trends are discussed in this article. The article also presents the results of research which aimed to study the relationship between leaders' personality traits and constructive thinking as well as the relationship between employees' organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and positive psychological capital in Lithuanian organizations (n=197).

1. Well being at work and psychological capital

Right around the turn of the last century, the field of psychology began to place greater importance on investigation what contributes to human flourishing (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001; Snyder & Lopez, 2002). Drawn from the recent positive psychology movement (Peterson, 2006; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002), the positive focus extended to the workplace by focusing on both the value of micro-oriented positivity in individuals as well as macro-oriented positivity in organizations (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007; Nelson & Cooper, 2007; Wright, 2003; Cameron & Caza, 2004; Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003; Roberts, 2006; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Positive organizational behavior for the first

time was defined as "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace" (Luthans, 2002). Moreover, a specific construct of psychological capital was introduced (Luthans, 2007). Psychological capital is conceptualized as an individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007, p. 3). Psychological capital is seen as a resource that goes beyond human capital (experience, knowledge, skills and abilities) and social capital (relationships, networks). It deals with "who you are here and now", and "who you can become" in the proximal future if your psychological resources are developed and nurtured in the workplace (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). In terms of measurement, a valid and reliable PsyCap questionnaire has been developed (Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007) and empirically validated (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007). The items used in it were originally drawn from published validated scales commonly used in positive psychology. These individual scales have also been used in previous studies in the workplace (e.g., Peterson & Luthans, 2003, Luthans et al., 2005; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Six items in this questionnaire represented each of the four components that make up PsyCap. These items were adapted for the workplace from the following standard scales: (1.) Hope (Snyder et al., 1996); (2.) Resilience (Wagnild & Young, 1993); (3.) Optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985); and (4.) Efficacy (Parker, 1998). Therefore, PsyCap meets the criteria of valid measurement and being open to development, and a growing number of studies have clearly demonstrated that it has impact on desired outcomes in the workplace. For example, PsyCap was shown to be positively related to employee satisfaction (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007). There is also increasing evidence that PsyCap is significantly related to desired employee behaviors (and negatively to undesired behaviors), attitudes (e.g., satisfaction and commitment), and performance (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007). Research studies evidently demonstrates the impact that PsyCap may have on satisfaction and/or commitment (Larson & Luthans, 2006; Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007; Luthans, Norman et al., 2008; Youssef & Luthans, 2007) and absenteeism (Avey, Patera, & West, 2006). Although PsyCap predominately focuses on positivity at the individual level, expanding research in the science and study institutions in the USA has also demonstrated positive relations between collective PsyCap and team performance (Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, & Avey, 2009; Peterson & Zhang, 2011; Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey, & Oke, 2011). There are at present in excess of 45 published PsyCap papers, and the emergence of the first meta-analysis is further evidence to the growth of PsyCap research (Avey, Reichard, et al., 2011). Some empirical research indicates that positive appraisals of life domains besides work (i.e., Relationship PsyCap and Health PsyCap) impact on employee's overall well-being (Luthans, Youssef, Sweetman, & Harms, 2010; Luthans & Harms, 2013). Furthermore, work-related positivity is viewed as antecedent not only for proximal work outcomes, but also for overall well-being over time (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010). A recent meta-analysis has provided further evidence of significant, positive relationships between PsyCap and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors and job performance and negative relationships with turnover intent, cynicism, job stress and deviance (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011). Therefore, based on the theory building and research to date, we have hypothesized that there would be statistically significant relations between constructs of psychological capital and job satisfaction as well as organizational commitment in Lithuanian organizations.

2. Well being at work and personality traits of a leader

Contemporary leadership psychology acknowledges that some leaders are motivated by goals and values, but some are motivated by greed or big egos (Babiak, 2007). As Paul Babiak and Robert D. Hare, the authors of book *Snakes in Suits* (2007) states, there are some individuals who allow the responsibilities of leadership and the perks of power to override their moral sense. Moreover, their grandiose sense of self-importance leads them to believe that other people exist just to take care of them. Another characteristic is an ability to avoid taking responsibility for things that go wrong; instead, they blame others, circumstances, fate, and so forth. Sometimes they rely on coercion, abuse, humiliation, harassment, aggression, and fear to get their way. They are callous to almost everyone, intentionally finding reasons to engage in conflict, to attack others unfairly (in private and in public), and to be generally antagonistic. They lack any insight into their own behavior, and seem unwilling or unable to moderate it, even when it is to their own advantage. Does this kind of leadership gives added value to organizational effectiveness? Obviously, not. How personality traits of a leader affect employees' well being? Classical Peter Drucker's model of effective leadership does not involve coercing people, silencing individuals with fear, or utilizing humiliating tactics to carry out orders (Maciariello, 2011, p. 246). Peter Drucker says that effective leadership is not 'making friends and influencing people'; effective leaders lead followers with dignity and inspire them toward achievement (Drucker, 2008, p. 288). The model of 'servant leadership', proposed by Robert Greenleaf (1970) involves providing subordinates with a considerable degree of freedom based on trust and respect. Jim Collins proposed idea of 'great leaders', who possesses the quality of humility (Collins, 2001). Therefore, based on the theory building and research to date on personality traits and the related constructs we have hypothesized that there would be statistically significant differences in personality traits of leaders in Lithuanian organizations, however, the results may vary depending on other respondents' characteristics.

Methods

This study used a test design utilizing a heterogeneous random sample of 197 working adults (leaders of various levels) representing a wide cross-section of Lithuanian organizations. Participants were sent an e-mail by the researchers or personally asked to participate in the study. The subjects of the study were 89 men and 108 women. Additional demographics of the sample included a mean age of 38.9 years and average job tenure of 6 years. The majority of the participants had bachelor degree or higher (68.6 %). The measures used in this study included: Job Satisfaction Survey (to assess personal job satisfaction, Spector, 1985), Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (to assess organizational commitment, Mowday et al., 2000), Psychological Capital Questionnaire (to assess positive psychological capital, Luthans et al., 2007), NEO-Five Factor Inventory (to measure neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, Costa & McCrae, 1990), Constructive Thinking Inventory, CTI (to assess constructive and destructive beliefs and thinking patterns, Epstein, 1993). CTI predicts a variety of desirable abilities/states, that are either unrelated or only very weakly related to intellectual intelligence, including work performance, social skills, and emotional and physical well-being. All responses for the questionnaires were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 - *strongly disagree*, 2 - *disagree*, 3 - *not sure*, 4 - *agree*, 5 - *strongly agree*. Each questionnaire demonstrated acceptable reliability in this study: Job Satisfaction *Cronbach* α =0,92, Organizational Commitment *Cronbach* α =0,90, Psychological Capital *Cronbach* α = 0,86. Reliability of NEO-FFI and CTI are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability of NEO-FFI and CTI in the Lithuanian study

Scales	Crobach Alpha
NEO-FFI	
<i>Neuroticism</i>	0,796
<i>Openness to experience</i>	0,753
<i>Extraversion</i>	0,697
<i>Agreeableness</i>	0,718
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	0,785
CTI	
<i>Global constructive thinking</i>	0,835

Results

Given the focus of the study, correlation analysis was determined to be the appropriate statistical technique. The results demonstrated statistically significant strong relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction ($r=0,76$, $p<0,01$), psychological capital and job satisfaction ($r=0,47$, $p<0,01$), psychological capital and organizational commitment ($r=0,52$, $p<0,01$).

In order to determine the relationship between organizational commitment and psychological capital (dependent variable was job satisfaction), we used linear regression analysis procedure (Enter model). The results of regression analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Linear regression analysis of organizational commitment and psychological capital in Lithuanian organizations

Components of the model	R	R ²	p	Non Standardize d coefficients	Standardized coefficients	t	p	Multicollinearity	
				B	β			Tolerance	VIF
Constanta	0,77	0,59	0,00	8,46	–	0,62	0,54	–	–
Organizational Commitment				1,82	0,71	8,99	0,00	0,73	1,38
Psychological Capital				0,19	0,09	1,14	0,26	0,73	1,38

Note. Dependent variable: job satisfaction; $p < 0,01$; $VIF < 4$; $Tolerance > 0,25$.

As it can be seen in Table 2, the regression is statistically significant ($p = 0,00$), and coefficient of *Pearson* shows strong relationship of variables ($R = 0,77$). Coefficient of regression analysis explains that in linear regression model the relationship found between dependent and independent variables is stronger than medium ($R^2 = 0,59$). Linear regression analysis focus on dependent and independent variables in regard to job satisfaction and organizational ($\beta = 0,71$; $p = 0,00$). Therefore, this linear regression analysis implies that the higher organizational commitment leads to higher job satisfaction ($t = 8,99$; $p = 0,00$).

In order to determine the relationship between job satisfaction and psychological capital (dependent variable was organizational commitment), we also used linear regression analysis procedure (Enter model). The results of regression analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Linear regression analysis of job satisfaction and psychological capital in Lithuanian organizations

Components of the model	R	R ²	p	Non Standardize d coefficients	Standardize d coefficients	t	p	Multicollinearity	
				B	β			Tolerance	VIF
Constanta	0,79	0,62	0,00	2,46	–	0,47	0,64	–	–
Job Satisfaction				0,26	0,03	1,14	0,00	0,78	1,28
Psychological Capital				0,18	0,06	2,90	0,05	0,78	1,28

Note. Dependent variable: organizational commitment; $p < 0,01$; $VIF < 4$; $Tolerance > 0,25$.

As it can be seen in Table 3, the regression is statistically significant ($p = 0,00$), and coefficient of *Pearson* shows strong relationship of variables ($R = 0,79$). Coefficient of regression analysis explains that in linear regression model the relationship found between dependent and independent variables is stronger than medium ($R^2 = 0,62$). This linear regression analysis ($\beta = 0,71$; $p = 0,00$) implies that the higher organizational commitment leads to higher job satisfaction ($t = 8,99$; $p = 0,00$). Coefficient of regression analysis demonstrates that dependent variable organizational commitment is statistically significantly related to independent variables: job satisfaction ($\beta = 0,03$; $p = 0,00$) and psychological capital ($\beta = 0,06$; $p = 0,05$). In regard to β coefficients, psychological capital is mostly related to organizational commitment. This implies that the rates of organizational commitment heightens in regard to the rates of job satisfaction ($t = 1,14$; $p = 0,00$) and psychological capital ($t = 2,90$; $p = 0,00$). To sum up, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and psychological capital are statistically significantly related in the group of respondents from different Lithuanian organizations.

As it is shown in Table 4, some statistically significant relationships were found between personality traits (NEO-FFI) and constructive thinking (CTI). Global constructive thinking was found to be statistically significantly negatively related to neuroticism ($r = -0,668$, $p = 0,000$), and statistically significantly positively related to extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness. As it can be observed, some other correlations between personality traits and thinking patterns were found.

Table 4. Relationship between personality traits (NEO-FFI) and constructive thinking (CTI), Pearson correlation

		<i>Neuroticism</i>	<i>Extraversion</i>	<i>Openness to experience</i>	<i>Agreeableness</i>	<i>Conscientiousness</i>
<i>Global constructive thinking</i>	r	-0,668	0,239	0,351	0,121	0,024
	p	0,000	0,014	0,000	0,218	0,811
<i>Emotional coping</i>	r	-0,625	0,208	0,321	0,066	-0,091
	p	0,000	0,033	0,001	0,503	0,358
<i>Behavioral coping</i>	r	-0,602	0,443	0,397	0,135	0,272
	p	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,169	0,005
<i>Superstitious thinking</i>	r	0,510	-0,164	-0,403	0,055	0,147
	p	0,000	0,095	0,000	0,579	0,135
<i>Esoteric thinking</i>	r	0,243	0,524	0,228	0,079	0,006
	p	0,013	0,000	0,019	0,424	0,955
<i>Categorical thinking</i>	r	0,264	0,122	-0,311	-0,372	0,195
	p	0,007	0,215	0,001	0,000	0,046
<i>Naive optimism</i>	r	-0,113	0,585	0,253	-0,070	0,235
	p	0,249	0,000	0,009	0,480	0,016

As it can be seen in Table 5, Linear regression analysis of personality traits (NEO-FFI) and constructive thinking (CTI) showed that openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness can be important in predicting the global constructive thinking.

Table 5. Linear regression analysis of personality traits and constructive thinking of leaders in Lithuanian organizations (n=105)

Components of the model	Non Standartized coefficients		Standartized coefficients	t	p
	Beta	Std. errot	Beta		
Constanta	153,700	9,826		15,643	0,000
<i>Neuroticism</i>	-0,942	0,094	-0,717	-9,972	0,000
<i>Extraversion</i>	0,061	0,122	0,043	0,500	0,618
<i>Openness to experience</i>	0,257	0,091	0,226	2,836	0,006
<i>Agreeableness</i>	0,077	0,089	0,062	0,863	0,390
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	-0,399	0,109	-0,297	-3,656	0,000

Dependent variable: Global constructive thinking

To sum up, the study revealed some statistically significant relations between personality traits and constructive thinking in various Lithuanian organizations. Moreover, it showed that openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness can be essential in prognosticating the global constructive thinking.

Conclusion:

This study confirmed that job satisfaction, organizational commitment and positive psychological capital are related constructs, and this Lithuanian research complements the previous studies done in various countries (Aydogdu, Asikgil, 2011; Avey et al., 2011; Gallato et al., 2012; Garg, Rastogi, 2009; Gomes, 2009; Fernando et al., 2007, cit. pagal Iqbal, 2012; Yucel, 2012; Kumar & Giri, 2009; Lumley et al., 2011; Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans et al., 2008c; Malik et al., 2010; Nagar, 2012; O'Reilly, Chatman, 1986; Salami, 2008; Seyal, Afzaal, 2013; Syauta et al., 2012; Spector, 1997b; Tayyab, 2006; Unal, 2012). It has also showed some statistically significant relations between personality traits and constructive thinking in Lithuanian organizations. It demonstrated that openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness can be essential in prognosticating the global constructive thinking. Nonetheless, supplementary research is needed to explore further the different factors contributing to well being at work, as it could have added value to practical applications in organizational settings.

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