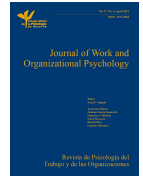# Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology

Analysis of Employees' Profiles of Responses to Personal and Workplace-Related Factors of Psychological Capital: The Profile Analysis via Multidimensional Scaling Approach

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies have highlighted psychological capital (PsyCap) as crucial for well-being, linking it to many positive workplace outcomes. Just as recognizing individual psychological or physical profiles helps tailor specific educational or treatment interventions, and personality or demographics assessments guide workplace decisions and behavior, understanding employees' psychological profiles related to their well-being can be highly valuable. This study goes beyond typical statistical analyses, using profile analysis via multidimensional scaling (PAMS) to explore employees' PsyCap profiles in relation to personal sense of power, trait self-control, perceived conflict, leader-member exchange, perceived organizational support, and organizational politics. The results reveal two central core profiles, showing that employees experiencing high organizational politics, intragroup conflict, reduced organizational support, and lower quality leader-member exchange, report lower PsyCap. These findings have methodological and practical implications, enhancing the understanding of PsyCap in workplaces and offering insights for managers and HR professionals..

Análisis de los perfiles de respuestas de los empleados a los factores personales y laborales del capital psicológico: análisis de los perfiles mediante el método de escalamiento multidimensional

RESUMEN

Estudios anteriores destacan el capital psicológico (PsyCap) como algo fundamental para el bienestar, asociándolo con diversos resultados laborales. Del mismo modo que reconocer los perfiles individuales psicológicos o físicos o la demografía es útil para adecuar la intervención educativa o de tratamiento específicos y la evaluación de la personalidad o de la demografía orienta las decisiones y el comportamiento laboral positivos, puede ser muy valioso conocer los perfiles psicológicos de los trabajadores referidos a su bienestar. Este estudio transciende los análisis estadísticos típicos para utilizar un análisis de perfiles a través del escalamiento multidimensional para explorar los perfiles PsyCap de los trabajadores en cuanto al sentido personal de poder, autocontrol como rasgo, la percepción de conflicto, el intercambio líder-empleado, la percepción de apoyo de la empresa y su política. Los resultados presentan dos perfiles principales centrales, mostrando que los trabajadores que experimentan alta política de empresa, conflicto intragrupal, escaso apoyo de la empresa y una baja calidad en el intercambio líder-empleado manifiestan un menor PsyCap. Estos hallazgos tienen implicaciones metodológicas y prácticas, facilitando la comprensión del PsyCap.

Recognizing individual psychological or physical profiles helps tailor specific educational or treatment interventions (e.g., Frisby & Kim, 2008; S.-K. Kim et al., 2017; S.-K. Kim et al., 2018; Olatunji et al., 2015; Sosinsky & Kim, 2013) while personality or demographics assessments guide workplace decisions and behavior (e.g., Caesens et al., 2023; Chernyak-Hai et al., 2018, 2019; Houle et al., 2020; Tziner et al., 2020). In the same way, understanding employees' psychological profiles related to their well-being can be incredibly advantageous. Accordingly, this study aimed to investigate the interrelationships between individual employee attitudes and perceptions, and their levels of PsyCap.

Specifically, we attempt a departure from traditional methodologies, aiming to introduce an alternative approach that reveals nuanced employee profiles, grounded in responses to an array

of PsyCap-related variables. Employing a unique statistical analysis method—Profile Analysis via Multidimensional Scaling (PAMS)—we delineate core profiles derived from employees' layered responses, including personal sense of power, trait self-control, perceived conflict, leader-member exchange, perceived organizational support, and organizational politics. This study's contribution is twofold. First, by applying PAMS, we illustrate how distinct combinations of workplace perceptions and attitudes coalesce into identifiable profiles. These profiles offer a comprehensive view of how employees perceive and interact with their organizational environments, making it possible to capture the interplay between personal and situational factors that shape PsyCap. Second, this approach paves the way for a more nuanced understanding of employee psychological profiles within the organizational context, moving beyond simple aggregate measures in predicting PsyCap dimensions. The insights derived from these profiles hold potential for developing targeted interventions and managerial strategies, as they suggest that different PsyCap profiles may require distinct resources and support. This study thus contributes to a richer, more dynamic conceptualization of PsyCap, broadening the literature to include not only trait or attitudes levels but also complex profiles that can better inform organizational practices.

We start by delineating the research variables and their anticipated interrelationships. Subsequently, an overview of PAMS technique is presented, highlighting its potential to enhance the comprehension of work-related PsyCap. It should be noted at the outset of the present study that PAMS is "not" used to test specific associative or predictive hypotheses. Rather, it aims to uncover and grasp the intricate response patterns that individuals exhibit across multiple PsyCap-related variables. Departing from the conventional emphasis on correlation and prediction, PAMS offers a flexible and comprehensive means to identify and understand these essential response patterns. Moreover, although our methodology does not hinge on specific hypotheses, it utilizes emergent core profiles to predict outcome variables, drawing support from previous studies (e.g., Chernyak-Hai et al., 2018; S.-K. Kim et al., 2017; McKay et al., 2018). This distinctive approach fosters a more comprehensive understanding of PsyCap in professional settings, unveiling response variations that mirror both organizational dynamics and individual well-being, and provides further insights for managers and HR professionals who are pursuing the elevation of employees' PsyCap.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in adopting the positive psychology approach as a means to understand personal functioning and well-being, as well as to explore strategies for their enhancement (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology represents a relatively new domain within the field of psychology, shifting its focus from solely addressing psychological maladies to emphasizing personal growth and development (Nolzen, 2018). This approach has gained traction in organizational research, particularly in the investigation of positive workplace behavior. The concept of Psychological Capital (PsyCap), proposed by Luthans and Youssef (2004, 2017), lies at the core of positive psychology's application in the realm of organizational behavior. PsyCap refers to the collection of personal psychological resources that foster productivity, optimal functioning, and the realization of individual potential (Seligman et al., 2005). These resources encompass positive psychological states, such as hope, resilience, self-efficacy, and optimism, and play a crucial role in shaping an individual's attitudes, behaviors, and performance. The incorporation of positive psychology and PsyCap in organizational psychology has opened up new avenues for exploring the elements that contribute to individual and collective success in the workplace. Researchers have increasingly recognized that understanding and harnessing the power of these positive psychological resources can lead to improved job satisfaction, better interpersonal relationships, increased work engagement, and greater overall well-being among

employees (Avey et al., 2011; Luthans et al., 2007). Moreover, organizations have shown a growing interest in implementing interventions and strategies aimed at enhancing PsyCap among their workforce. These initiatives include training, coaching, and other activities aimed at cultivating positive psychological states. This fosters a positive work environment, promoting personal growth and helping employees reach their potential, ultimately boosting productivity and organizational success (Avey et al., 2009).

Amidst the growing interest in positive psychology and PsyCap, this study uniquely contributes to the field by investigating the relationship between employees' psychological "profiles" and their PsyCap. By identifying specific employee characteristics linked to positive psychological resources, it provides valuable insights for designing effective interventions to enhance PsyCap.

Theoretical Background

PsyCap is a concept that revolves around an individual's positive psychological state. The term was defined by Luthans et al. (2015). According to their definition, PsyCap encompasses four essential components that characterize a person's outlook and approach towards challenges and successes: (1) having confidence (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 (resilience) to attain success (Luthans et al., 2015, p. 2).

These four components reflect the available psychological resources invested in coping with tasks and, when combined, represent employees' "capital" in promoting performance and job satisfaction. Importantly, the higher-order concept has higher predictive value of workplace functioning than its separate components have (Luthans et al., 2007). Accordingly, we analyze the variables constituting PsyCap using profile analysis via multidimensional scaling (PAMS) to identify the most typical response profiles (also known as core profiles) from the individual profiles of observed responses to the variables associated with high and low levels of PsyCap.

Due to the fact that prior research has demonstrated that PsyCap can be an important predictor of employee satisfaction and productivity (e.g., Grover et al., 2018; Y. Li, 2018; Paliga et al., 2022), the utilization of PAMS to delve deeper into the factors associated with both low and high levels of PsyCap is expected to shed light on how the specific constellation of personal and work-related factors can foster or diminish PsyCap. We propose that researching employees' PsyCap profiles in relation to their psychological traits and perceived workplace environments can significantly advance workplace psychology. Understanding these interrelations can reveal key drivers of employee well-being and performance, allowing for tailored interventions to enhance PsyCap and improve engagement, productivity, and job satisfaction. Insights from PsyCap profiles can inform customized training, effective recruitment, and supportive organizational cultures. Additionally, empirical evidence can refine theoretical frameworks, leading to robust management practices. Thus, investigating PsyCap profiles promotes individual and organizational well-being while contributing to the academic discourse on workplace psychological capital.

Using PAMS to Identify Core Profiles of PsyCap

PAMS is a statistical technique for analysis of person profiles of observed responses to measurement variables using the principle of multidimensional scaling (MDS), which enables the examination of similarities and differences among variables. MDS involves mapping the variables onto a geometric space typically

represented by the first two dimensions, with the distances between the variables on the space reflecting their similarities or differences in the original dataset. In other words, MDS creates a two-dimensional visual representation of the relationships between variables (e.g., Borg & Groenen, 2005; Frisby & Kim, 2008; S.-K. Kim, 2010a, 2010b). However, unlike MDS, PAMS, which utilizes the MDS technique, interprets each dimension as a core profile that summarizes numerous individuals' profiles of observed responses to measurements; thus, the interpretation of inter-variable relationships on a two-dimensional map is not of primary importance in PAMS. Rather, PAMS makes it easier for researchers to understand the central response patterns derived from the response profiles of multiple individuals by using a small number of core profiles (e.g., Chernyak-Hai et al., 2018; Tziner et al., 2020).

Core Profiles versus Latent Factors

It is thought that the core profiles found by PAMS are latent because they are estimated over latent dimensions. However, the PAMS core profiles usually show the central response patterns observed in person response profiles that generate data in a rectangular shape, with rows representing person response profiles and columns representing measurement scores. Therefore, in our manuscript we demonstrate how a specific core profile or a linear combination of them can explain individual response profiles. In contrast to factors or latent profiles in factor analysis or latent class analysis, which cannot establish a connection between their latent factors or profiles and observed person data, the PAMS method offers a unique and valuable comprehension of person response profiles by means of core profile pattern information (S.-K. Kim, 2023).

In this study, PAMS core profiles represent the most prevalent PsyCap patterns in participants who responded to PsyCap variables; therefore, we can derive intuitive descriptions of the high or low participant responses to PsyCap.

Psychological Capital Related Variables

To uncover patterns of employee variables associated with their PsyCap levels, we examined individual variables, including personal characteristics and perceptions of the workplace environment. Several variables were previously shown to antecede PsyCap at work, including self-esteem, perceived relationships with the leader, perceptions of organizational environment and practices, and positive work and life experiences (e.g., Avey, 2014; Newman et al., 2014; Nolzen, 2018; Wu, 2019). We first outline these variables and their expected associations with PsyCap, and then detail the rationale and the methodology of the present study.

Personal Sense of Power and Trait Self-Control

Previous research has indicated positive associations between employees' individual ability to remain motivated through self-encouragement and emotional self-control, as well as their PsyCap (Mellão & Mónico, 2013). In general, self-management-related variables (e.g., self-regulation; Luthans et al., 2022), which assess one's ability to act based on personal volition rather than external coercion or internal compulsion, may be invaluable to PsyCap. Specifically, one's sense of personal power and ability to exert self-control are crucial psychological resources that can serve as buffers, with personal sense of power reducing the stress of external stressors, while self-control regulates internal ones.

Perceptions of personal power reflect a dynamic psychological state related to one's perceived ability to influence others (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007). Such perceptions have been shown to positively predict assertiveness, self-esteem, physical health, and longevity

(Anderson et al., 2012). According to the approach-inhibition theory of power, feeling powerful causes a cognitive and behavioral shift, with increased attention to potential rewards and decreased attention to potential threats (Keltner et al., 2003). This shift facilitates greater self-expression under both experimental (Chen et al., 2009) and organizational settings (T. H. Kim et al., 2019). In line with this, research has linked increased personal power with greater authenticity and self-concept consistency (Kraus et al., 2011). Additionally, power has been shown to reduce the effects of situational pressure on behavior, making one less affected by outside social and situational behavioral cues (Galinsky et al., 2008). Taken together, these effects may suggest that feeling powerful affords one greater access to positive psychological resources, while reducing one's susceptibility to environmental stressors (Sherman et al., 2019). Accordingly, employees reporting high levels of perceived power have been found to experience fewer negative emotions in the workplace (Laslo-Roth & Schmidt-Barad, 2020), to be more likely to speak out (e.g., Morrison et al., 2015), and to exhibit higher creativity (Zhou & He, 2020). Thus, having the ability to influence others positively, assertiveness, positive emotions, and self-esteem, all might align with the components of psychological capital, i.e., self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. Further, the shift in attention towards potential rewards and away from threats suggests that individuals with higher perceived power may be more likely to focus on opportunities and cope effectively with challenges, contributing to their overall psychological capital.

Similarly, trait self-control, one's ability to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behavior (Baumeister et al., 2007), has been found to be a stable characteristic broadly predicting the achievement of personal goals (De Ridder et al., 2012) and behavioral flexibility (Rothbaum et al., 1982). Previous research has shown that self-control enables one to adapt to the environment by suppressing automatic responses in favor of more rational, adaptive behavior (Baumeister et al., 2007). Moreover, similarly to personal sense of power, previous research has indicated that self-control may act as a protective factor, buffering the negative impact of potential stressors (Gailliot et al., 2006; Gailliot, 2007; Zabelina et al., 2007). Additionally, self-control has been shown to be strongly and positively correlated with grit (Duckworth & Gross, 2014), another factor relating to one's ability to tenaciously persevere in the face of challenge or resistance. Self-control is also associated with various positive workplace outcomes such as lower aggression (Douglas & Martinko, 2001) and improved ability to remain focused on tasks, monitor for errors, ignore distractions, avoid inappropriate behaviors, and enjoy positive social interactions (Johnson et al., 2018). Hence, one can expect the ability to effectively control one's actions and emotions will enhance an individual's psychological resources, fostering a greater sense of self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience, ultimately contributing to increased psychological capital.

However, neither personal sense of power nor self-control have been previously researched as particular antecedents of PysCap in general, and PysCap in the workplace in particular. Given that personal sense of power and trait self-control both allow individuals to invest psychological resources in coping with tasks, as power mitigates potential stressors and self-control fosters behavioral flexibility, we expected personal sense of power and trait self-control to have positive associations with PsyCap.

Intragroup Conflict

In addition to the personal-level variables, studies have also indicated that perceptions of work-related tasks and relationships have important implications for employees' functioning and well-being. Particularly, because much of the work in current organizations is performed in teams (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018), perceptions of disharmony in work relations, also referred to as intragroup conflict—

including intellectual opposition, interpersonal incompatibilities, and tension among group members (Hoegl et al., 2004; Pearson et al., 2002)—are important to consider. Such conflicts impact team dynamics, decision-making processes, and communication within the workplace (Kay & Skarlicki, 2020). Thus, recognizing and addressing the implications of workplace conflicts on employees' PsyCap is crucial for a positive team atmosphere and effective decision-making. Lastly, intragroup workplace conflict is viewed as dynamic and interpretive, comprising relationship conflict (RC), which involves interpersonal tension and rejection, and task conflict (TC), which involves differences in ideas or opinions related to work tasks (Suifan et al., 2020). While TC can be beneficial in certain workplace contexts (Leon-Perez et al., 2016), both forms of intragroup conflict generally correlate with negative psychological outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion and decreased work engagement (Esbati & Korunka, 2021), as well as diminished performance and satisfaction (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Kay & Skarlicki, 2020).

Accordingly, we expected intragroup conflict at work (RC and TC) to have negative associations with PsyCap.

Leader-Member Exchange

The quality of the relationship between employees and their supervisors, commonly referred to as LMX, is another relational variable that has been extensively researched in relation to employee performance and well-being (see Zhao et al., 2019). LMX pertains to the degree of reciprocal exchange between leaders and their followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), including information exchange, interaction, trust, respect, support, mutual influence, and rewards (e.g., Andersen et al., 2020; Chernyak-Hai & Tziner, 2014; Zhao et al., 2019). LMX has been found to predict employee motivation and attitudes across various aspects of organizational functioning (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018; Dulebohn et al., 2012; Fein et al., 2020). Accordingly, research has indicated positive relations between LMX and employees' subjective well-being (Le et al., 2020), job satisfaction (Hassaan & Khan, 2022; Pan et al., 2021), and PsyCap (Xerri et al., 2020). Specifically, high-quality LMX leads to increased feelings of self-efficacy (Han & Bai, 2020), as employees believe that their efforts and contributions are valued and recognized by their supervisor. In line with this, high-quality LMX can create a positive work environment where employees feel empowered and encouraged to take on challenges. Additionally, LMX was found to contribute to the development of employees' resilience (Kakkar, 2019). Consequently, we may assume that supervisors who maintain positive LMX instill a sense of aspiration and hope in their subordinates, leading to a more positive outlook for their future within the organization.

Hence, we expected perceived quality of LMX to have positive associations with PsyCap.

Perceived Organizational Support and Politics

In addition to personal characteristics and immediate workplace relations, employees' psychological states have been found to be significantly influenced by their perceptions of overall organizational factors. Particularly, perceived organizational support (POS), which refers to employees' perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986), predicts several positive outcomes for employees, such as greater engagement and commitment, improved performance, reduced turnover, and enhanced well-being, including positive mood and reduced strain (e.g., Kleine et al., 2019; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Recent research has also highlighted the impact of POS on creativity, innovation, and overall positive emotions (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Therefore, it is plausible that POS and employees' PsyCap

are interconnected constructs that significantly impact workplace dynamics and individual well-being—higher levels of POS foster the development and enhancement of employees' PsyCap, while a strong PsyCap empowers individuals to better recognize and appreciate the support provided by the organization. As employees experience increased support, their PsyCap can further strengthen, leading to a positive feedback loop of improved well-being and job satisfaction. In the same vein, employees' perceived organizational politics (POP) has important implications for their psychological states. POP indicates the extent to which employees perceive that organizational members prioritize personal interests and engage in self-serving actions such as favoritism and nepotism, preferential access to opportunities, personal benefits, and rewards (e.g., Chang et al., 2009; Khattak et al., 2021; Meisler et al., 2020; Varela-Neira et al., 2018). Research has found that higher levels of POP are positively associated with undesirable work outcomes, such as stress, burnout, and turnover intentions, and even hostility and counterproductive work behaviors. Conversely, POP is negatively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, task performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (see Meisler et al., 2020). Thus, POP can have a detrimental impact on employees' PsyCap. When employees perceive high levels of organizational politics, characterized by favoritism, unfair decision-making, and power struggles, it creates an environment of distrust and uncertainty (e.g., De Clercq et al., 2023; C. Li et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2019). One can assume that such perceptions diminish employees' confidence in their abilities (self-efficacy) and belief in positive outcomes (optimism), leading to reduced motivation and engagement. Moreover, the prevalence of organizational politics may erode employees' hope, as they perceive limited opportunities for growth and advancement, and dampen their resilience, making coping with the stress and negativity challenging.

Accordingly, we expected positive association between POS and PsyCap and negative association between POP and PsyCap.

The Current Study

In the current research, we studied a sample of employees with the aim of measuring their direct perceptions and experiences, and unveiling their intercorrelations to indicate concrete profiles as tested by PAMS. To achieve this, we employed a correlational research design and administered validated measures using the self-report assessment technique to assess the research variables.

Method

Participants

Four hundred and twenty-two employees from the US and UK were recruited for this study via the Prolific online research platform, in exchange for a monetary reward of £9 or $11 per hour. We included only fulltime salaried employees and non-senior level managers, resulting in a sample of 400 participants (67% from the UK), of whom 53 were women (M_{age} = 41, SD = 10.17; $M_{tenure\ in\ years}$ = 7.5, SD = 3.42). The participants were employed in a variety of core domains (see Table 1).

This study was approved by the Ethical Committee of the Peres Academic Center, Israel (approval no. 405).

Measures

Participants answered a 24-item measure of PsyCap at work, asking them to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement on a 6-point scale (e.g., "I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*; PCQ-24; Luthans et al., 2006). Items 13, 20, and 23

were reverse-coded (e.g., "When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on"). We averaged these items to create a PsyCap index (α = .94).

Table 1. Domains of Employment

	Count	Percent
Non-profit	24	6.0
Industry	17	4.3
Sales/Commercial	33	8.3
Finance	31	7.8
Communication	7	1.8
Engineering	14	3.5
Programming	12	3.0
Transportation	20	5.0
Tourism	1	0.3
Law	4	1.0
Public services/Government	41	10.3
Health services	51	12.8
Construction	11	2.8
Entertainment	15	3.8
Internet	10	2.5
Fashion and beauty	2	0.5
Education	68	17.0
Other	39	9.8
Total	400	100

Also, the participants completed additional seven measures—Personal Sense of Power (PSP), Self-Control (SlfCon), Relational Conflict (RelCon), Task Conflict (TaskCon), Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Perceived Organizational Support (POS), and Perceived Organizational Politics (POP).

Personal Sense of Power (PSP)

This consisted of 8 items measure assessing participants' sense of power on a 7-point Likert scale (e.g. "If I want to, I get to make the decisions"; Anderson et al., 2012), where items 2, 4, 6, and 7 were reverse-coded (Cronbach alpha = .93).

Self-control (SlfCon)

SlfCon was composed of a 13-item brief measure of trait self-control, in which the participants indicated the extent to which each statement reflects how they typically are on a 5-point Likert scale (e.g., "I refuse things that are bad for me"; Tangney et al., 2004), where items 2-5, 7, 9, 12, and 13 were reverse-coded (Cronbach alpha = .86).

Perceived Conflict

RelCon and TaskCon were created from the three items of relational conflict (e.g., "How much personal friction is there in the group during decisions?"; Cronbach alpha = .89) and three items of task conflict (e.g., "How many disagreements over different ideas were there?"; Cronbach alpha = .87), respectively (Pearson et al., 2002).

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

The participants answered a 7-items measure on a 5-point Likert scale, in which they indicated their relationship with their leader by rating the degree to which they think each item is true for them (e.g., "How well does your leader understands your job problems and needs?"; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) (Cronbach alpha = .93).

Perceived Organizational Support POS

This consisted of 8 items measure on a 6-point Likert scale, asking participants to indicate the degree of their agreement or disagreement with statements related to their opinions about working at their organization (e.g., "The organization really cares about my well-being"; Eisenberger et al., 1986), where items 2, 3, 5, and 7 were reverse-coded (Cronbach alpha = .85).

Perceived Organizational Politics (POP)

It was accessed by a 13-item measure in which the participants indicated their perceptions of politics in their organization by rating each item on a 5-point Likert scale (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) (Cronbach alpha = .93).

Prior to analyzing the data, all the scale scores of PSP, SlfCon, RelCon, TaskCon, LMX, POS, and POP were converted to z-scores because the Likert scales used had different point ranges. PAMS was then used to analyze the profiles of individuals' responses on these seven variables.

Results[1]

Two core profiles were identified among 400 person profiles consisting of seven scales scores: PSP, SlfCon, RelCon, TaskCon, LMX, POS, and POP. The stress value for the solution with two core profile was .006, indicating an excellent fit to data[2]. Table 2 summarizes the 95% bootstrap bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) confidence intervals for the scale values of the two core profiles. The core profile configurations with their confidence bands are depicted in Figures 1 and 2. As shown in these figures and Table 1, none of the seven

Table 2. The 95% Bootstrap BCa Confidence Intervals for Core Profile Coordinates

|	CP1	2.5th %	97.5th %	CP2	2.5th %	97.5th %
PSP	-.53	-.62	-.40	.09	.02	.22
SlfCon	-.32	-.44	-.22	.50	.39	.60
RelCon	.61	.55	.70	-.10	-.17	.05
TaskCon	.57	.49	.68	-.23	-.34	-.15
LMX	-.56	-.69	-.44	-.37	-.49	-.23
POS	-.59	-.71	-.52	-.22	-.43	-.15
POP	.82	.72	.91	.32	.19	.46
% accounted for by a CP	40%			22%		

Note. CP (core profile); PSP (personal sense of power); SlfCon (trait self-control); RelCon (relational conflict); TaskCon (task conflict); LMX (leader-member exchange); POS (perceived organizational support); and POP (perceived organizational politics).
For a visual examination of Table 2's results, we depicted them in Figures 1 and 2. As expected, none of the confidence intervals in Figures 1 and 2 contain zero, indicating that all the coordinates in Core Profiles 1 and 2 are statistically significant.

domain scale values include zeros, indicating that all are statistically significant at α = .05.

To examine the relationships between the seven scales used for PAMS and the PsyCap measure, we conducted regression, with PsyCap serving as the outcome variable and the two core profiles serving as predictor variables. The analysis yielded an R^2 value of .43 ($p < .001$). The regression coefficient for the first person weight was statistically significant (b_1 = -0.51, SE = 0.031, t = -16.24, $p < .001$), whereas the regression coefficient for the second person weight was marginally significant at α = .05 (b_2 = 0.06, SE = 0.032, t = 1.91, p = .057).

The significant result based on the first core profile indicates that participants whose profiles were similar to the "first core profile" would have had "lower" PsyCap scores. On the other hand, participant profile patterns resembling a mirror image of the first core profile would have been positively associated with or had "higher" PsyCap scores. The 95% confidence intervals for BCa for the coordinates of core profiles 1 and 2 are summarized in Table 2. According to the table, none of the confidence intervals contain zero, indicating that every coordinate is statistically significant.
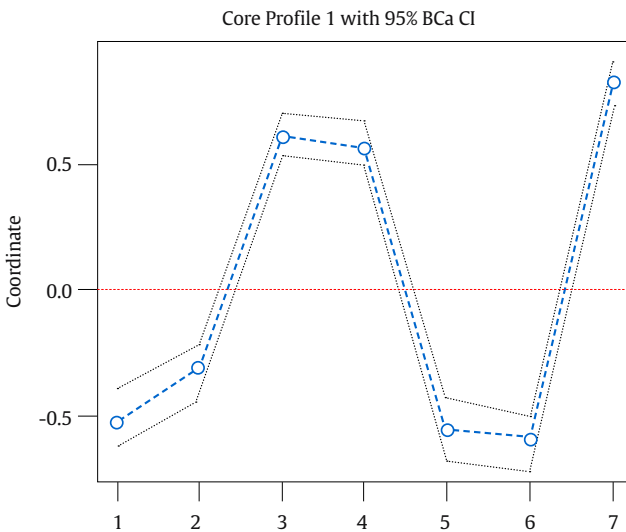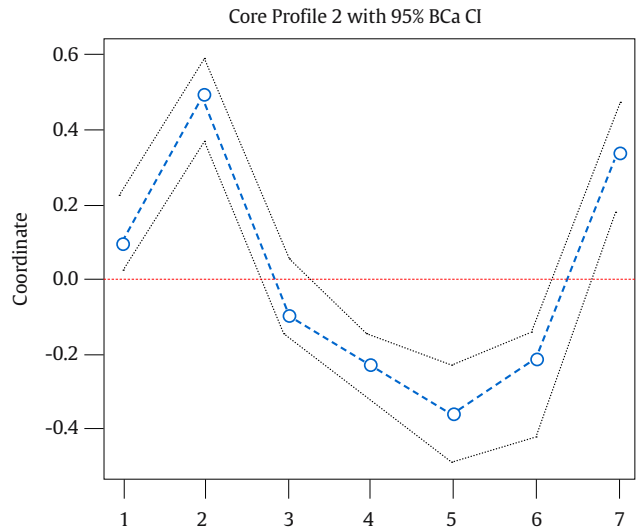

Figure 1. Core Profile 1 with the 95% Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) Confidence Interval.
Note. 1 = PSP (personal sense of power), 2 = SlfCon (trait of self-control), 3 = RelCon (relational conflict), 4 = TaskCon (task conflict), 5 = LMX (leader-member exchange), 6 = POS (perceived organizational support), and 7 = POP (perceived organizational politics).

The interpretation of the core profiles relies on peaks (high scores) and valleys (low scores) in them. For core profile 1 depicted in Figure 1, there are peaks at 3 (RelCon), 4 (TaskCon), and 7 (POP), while there are valleys at 1 (PSP), 5 (LMX), and 6 (POS). Thus, we label the 1st profile as "Conflict versus Power and Support" core profile; 40% of (response pattern) variance in the person-response profiles was accounted for by core profile 1. There are "peaks" at 2 (SlfCon) and 7 (POP), and "valleys" at 5 (LMX) in core profile 2 of Figure 2, which accounted for 22% of pattern variance in the person-response profiles. Hence, we label the 2nd profile as "Self-Control and Politics versus Leader-Member Exchange" core profile.

We also estimated the correlations between person-response profiles and core profiles for every participant in this sample. These correlations serve as matching statistics indicating the degree to which each individual's profile resembles the core profiles and are useful for assessing individuals based on core profile information. To illustrate, we selected the first ten participants and listed their levels, R^2 values, and correlations in Table 3. Since the levels were converted to z-scores, the negative values represent average person scores on

the seven subscales that are below zero, whereas the positive values represent average person scores above zero. R^2 values represent the proportions of variance in person-response profiles that are explained by the core profiles; they are estimated by regressing each person-response profile onto core profiles 1 and 2. Thus, R^2 values for individual 400 participants in this study's sample are provided in the PAMS results. Note that the 62% of response pattern variance explained by core profiles 1 and 2 represents an average of the R^2 values of 400 participants.

Figure 2. Core Profile 2 with the 95% Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) Confidence Interval.
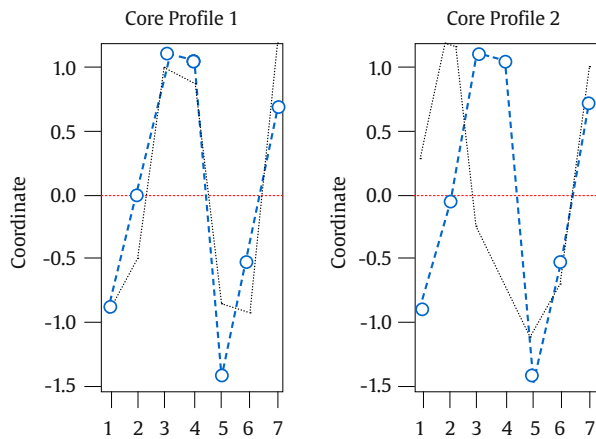*Note.* 1 = PSP (personal sense of power), 2 = SlfCon (trait of self-control), 3 = RelCon (relational conflict), 4 = TaskCon (task conflict), 5 = LMX (leader-member exchange), 6 = POS (perceived organizational support), and 7 = POP (perceived organizational politics).

Table 3. Person Levels, R-Squared Values, and Correlations

	Level	R^2	corCP1	corCP2
#1	-.28	.78	.88	.14
#2	-.50	.84	.90	-.77
#3	-.40	.91	-.94	-.76
#4	-.60	.49	.35	.64
#5	-.39	.57	-.37	.75
#6	-.02	.84	-.89	.83
#7	-.07	.54	.42	.66
#8	.83	.84	.91	.18
#9	.16	.63	.33	-.79
#10	.45	.87	-.93	-.01

Note. corCP1 and corCP2 represent person correlations with core profiles 1 and 2.

As shown in Table 3, for example, person #8's average or level is above .83 standard deviation units, and this person's profile would be similar to core profile 1 because this person's correlation with core profile 1 was substantial (r = .91) but not with core profile 2 (r = .18). To visually inspect the similarity between person #8's profile and core profile 1, we plotted person #8's profile and core profiles 1 and 2 in Figure 3. Person #8's profile resembles core profile 1 as anticipated. Consequently, the subscale configuration found in core profile 1 can define the workplace and psychological capital-related characteristics of person #8. Person #8 has high RelCon, TaskCon, and POP scales scores, but low PSP, LMX, and POS scales scores, i.e., exhibiting "Conflict versus Power and Support" profile characteristic of low PsyCap. This scale configuration of core profile 1 can be used to describe person #8's organizational characteristics.

Figure 3. Person #8 Profile Juxtaposed with Core Profiles 1 and 2.
Note. The solid line represents person #8's profile, while the dashed line represents core profiles 1 and 2. 1 = PSP (personal sense of power), 2 = SlfCon (trait of self-control), 3 = RelCon (relational conflict), 4 = TaskCon (task conflict), 5 = LMX (leader-member exchange), 6 = POS (perceived organizational support), and 7 = POP (perceived organizational politics).

On the other hand, person #6's profile would be a mirror image of core profile 1 and a similar image of core profile 2 due to a strong negative correlation with profile 1 ($r = -.89$) and a strong positive correlation with profile 2 ($r = .83$). Figure 4 depicts the profile of person #6 and core profiles 1 and 2 to verify this. As shown in Figure 4, the profile of person #6 is a mirror image of profile 1 but resembles profile 2 to some extent. Thus, this person's workplace and psychological capital related characteristics can be defined by the high 2 (SelfCon) and 6 (POS) scales scores in contrast to the low 3 (RelCon) and 4 (TaskCon) scales scores; this scale configuration is comparable to that of core profile 2 to some degree. In other words, this employee exhibits a "Self-Control and Politics versus Leader-Member Exchange" profile. Since the relationship between PsyCap and the second profile in the regression results was not statistically significant, we do not interpret this relationship. Note however that the second profile was significant in itself as a representation of the central response pattern accounting for 22% of participants' responses on the seven scales, although it was statistically significantly related with PsyCap at $p = .05$.
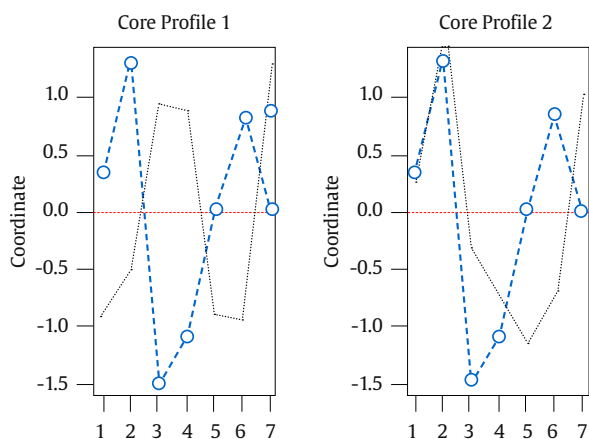
Figure 4. Person #6 Profile Juxtaposed with Core Profiles 1 and 2.
Note. The solid line represents person #6's profile, while the dashed line represents core profiles 1 and 2. 1 = PSP (personal sense of power), 2 = SlfCon (trait of self-control), 3 = RelCon (relational conflict), 4 = TaskCon (task conflict), 5 = LMX (leader-member exchange), 6 = POS (perceived organizational support), and 7 = POP (perceived organizational politics).

Discussion

A deeper understanding of how employees' individual factors interrelate with their PsyCap can reveal the key drivers of employee well-being and performance. This knowledge can enable the development of tailored interventions to enhance PsyCap. Specifically, insights from PsyCap profiles can guide the design of customized training programs and foster supportive organizational cultures. Additionally, such empirical evidence can refine and expand theoretical frameworks, leading to robust, evidence-based management practices that enhance decision-making and leadership.

Specifically, we summarize the present findings as follows:

1. Employees manifest either higher or lower levels of PsyCap in the workplace. In particular, according to the "Conflict versus Power and Support" core profile (i.e., the first core profile that had significant associations with PsyCap), employees with high levels of perceived organizational politics and intragroup conflict at work, as well as low levels of perceived organizational support, personal sense of power, and LMX, tend to have lower PsyCap scores.

2. The mirror interpretation of this finding is that employees identified having low perceptions of conflict in the workplace, but high perceptions of workplace support (both in terms of the quality of their relationships with their leaders and overall organizational support), are associated with higher levels of PsyCap. This implies that when employees experience a more harmonious and cooperative work environment, they are more likely to possess greater psychological resources that contribute to their overall well-being and performance.

3. Furthermore, our study highlights the significance of workplace support. Employees who reported having positive and supportive relationships with their leaders and the organization demonstrated high levels of PsyCap. This suggests that when employees feel valued, appreciated, and adequately supported by their superiors and the organization as a whole, they are more likely to develop and maintain a positive mindset, resilience, self-efficacy, and hope, which are key components of PsyCap.

Theoretical Implications

There are several theoretical implications of the findings. First, our investigation further solidifies the idea that psychosocial factors, specifically perceptions of conflict (e.g., De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Esbati & Korunka, 2021), organizational politics (e.g., Meisler et al., 2020), and workplace support (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kleine et al., 2019; Kurtessis et al., 2017), play pivotal roles in shaping employees' psychological capital. These outcomes emphasize the crucial importance of understanding employees' perceptions and experiences within their work environment when assessing their levels of psychological capital. Second, what sets our study apart is the identification of a specific combination of psychological and workplace-related variables, referred to as the "employee profile", that is prominent among employees reporting low versus high PsyCap levels. The distinct profiles that emerged through our analyses reveal that employees with low PsyCap were associated with negative environmental factors (i.e., conflict and politics). On the other hand, employees exhibiting high PsyCap demonstrated a connection to positive elements, encompassing personal aspects like a sense of personal power and self-control, as well as organizational factors like leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support.

These findings align with the principles of the approach-inhibition theory of power, which suggests that individuals who feel powerful experience a sense of freedom from external threats and obstacles, which, in turn, enables them to pursue their intrinsic goals with greater confidence and determination (Keltner et al., 2003). Our findings are also in line with previous research associating elevated

perceived power with the active pursuit of personally congruent goals (Chen et al., 2009) and increased authenticity (Kraus et al., 2011), as a sense of agency is an important part of PsyCap (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). The role of self-control in predicting high PsyCap aligns with previous research linking self-control with other positive life outcomes (Tangney et al., 2004), as well as greater grit and perseverance (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). These findings suggest that self-control may increase one's resilience by fostering greater PsyCap as well.

Furthermore, the present investigation suggests an alternative and nuanced methodology for exploring the associations between PsyCap-related factors. The PAMS method provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the examined variables. Unlike traditional correlation-based techniques such as factor analysis or regression analysis, PAMS allows for simultaneous examination of core profiles for the individuals' profiles of observed responses across multiple dimensions. Our use of PAMS has identified two core profiles that reflect typical employee response patterns related to PsyCap and workplace variables. This significantly enhances our understanding of employees' response patterns, enabling nuanced analysis such as assessing the similarity or dissimilarity of individual response profiles. Additionally, this approach can investigate how employee beliefs, attitudes, and workplace behaviors correspond to specific profiles.

Practical Implications

The findings of the current study have a number of practical implications for organizations and HR professionals, serving as valuable insights to inform managerial decision-making and enhance employees' psychological capital.

Fostering PsyCap through Supportive Leadership and Conflict Resolution

Our findings suggest that organizations should prioritize the establishment of a positive and supportive work environment. Based on the implications drawn from the present study, creating such an environment can be achieved through two key factors: effective leadership and the implementation of conflict resolution strategies. Effective leadership plays a vital role in setting the tone of the workplace, fostering open communication, and building trust among employees (Zhao et al., 2019). A supportive leader who recognizes and appreciates the efforts of their team members can significantly contribute to employees' well-being and psychological capital. Moreover, the present findings suggest that the presence of conflict resolution strategies is equally vital. Conflicts are inevitable in any organization (Rahim, 2023), but how they are addressed and resolved can greatly impact employee morale. By having clear and effective conflict resolution procedures in place, organizations can ensure that disputes are handled fairly and promptly, minimizing negative effects on employee well-being.

HR Strategies in Enhancing PsyCap

Our study highlights the importance of ongoing efforts to nurture and promote employees' psychological capital. This may involve investing in programs and initiatives that encourage employees to focus on their work-related responsibilities rather than engaging in political acts that could create tension and conflict. HR can play a role in communicating these guidelines and addressing any political conflicts that arise. Moreover, building trust and support within the organization is crucial. Promoting employees' trust in their organization and its leaders could potentially translate into higher PsyCap. When employees perceive their leaders and organization as trustworthy, they are more likely to experience increased levels of hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy—key components of PsyCap. By fostering open, transparent communication and demonstrating consistent support from leadership, HR can create an environment where employees feel valued and understood. This sense of trust can reinforce employees' belief in the organization's commitment to their well-being and professional growth, which in turn boosts their optimism and confidence in facing work challenges. Furthermore, trust-building initiatives can help employees view setbacks as manageable rather than insurmountable, enhancing resilience and promoting a mindset oriented toward growth and problem-solving. Lastly, HR can incorporate PsyCap assessments into performance evaluations or employee development programs. These assessments allow HR to identify strengths and areas for improvement in employees' PsyCap. By tailoring employee development based on these insights, HR can personalize training and resources to enhance employees' well-being and performance. Additional advantages of this approach include predicting performance and retention, supporting employee resilience, promoting a positive organizational culture, and tracking progress over time.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study has a couple of limitations. First, as our focus was on subjective perceptions of both individual and workplace variables, we relied on self-reported measures of the employee variables, assuming that employees were the most knowledgeable about their experiences. Future studies may investigate supervisors' PsyCap assessments of their employees. Relatedly, we collected data on the variables at one point in time to diagnose the associations of the accessed variables in relation to PsyCap, for the purpose of identifying defined profiles. However, as with any point-in-time study, this design may present a limitation. Recent studies that applied the PAMS method have shown that it can be used in a longitudinal study (e.g., Ding et al., 2005; S.-K. Kim et al., 2017). Accordingly, future research could examine whether employees' PsyCap profiles remain the same or change over a specified period of time.

Second, the current study focused on general, rather than context-specific, relationships between psychological variables relevant to employees, basic workplace perceptions, and personal characteristics associated with PsyCap. However, some variables, such as LMX, intragroup conflicts, and perceived organizational support, could be affected by the specific group and organizational contexts in which the respondents are located. In this sense, future research could include contextual covariates to explore whether the obtained profiles manifest differently according to specific workplace contexts.

Another concern is that the present sample included employees from the United States and the United Kingdom, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Cultural differences in work-related values, beliefs, and attitudes towards work may influence how employees perceive and respond to organizational politics, intragroup conflict, support, and power. Therefore, it is possible that the observed profiles may not reflect the experiences of employees from other cultural contexts. Thus, subsequent research could compare employees from the same industry, but with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Conclusions

This study's contributions lie in its use of profile analysis to examine the relationship between employees' psychological resources and their perceptions of workplace variables and

organizational environment. By employing a statistical technique for analysis of personal profiles, we find that workplace PsyCap corresponds with individual and organizational factors and their alignment. Our study supports previous research on positive psychology at the workplace (e.g., Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Nolzen, 2018) and provides further insights for managers and HR professionals who are pursuing the elevation of employees' PsyCap by tailoring interventions to specific employee profiles.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

Data availability

The data can be accessed through the Open Science Framework at: https://osf.io/bt5nk/?view_only=40854f1f9f564d858f0a0fa76e-fa30a2

Notes

[1]While PAMS estimates core profiles for individuals based on Euclidean distance between objects, correlations between objects have a statistically inverse relationship with distance. As a result, both correlation-based factor analysis and distance-based PAMS extract comparable latent information from individuals. However, PAMS is intended to estimate the most common response patterns among individuals, known as core profiles, whereas factor analysis is intended to estimate latent factors of person traits, which differs from PAMS. Furthermore, we have included a report on traditional analyses (correlations and multiple regression) in the Appendix.

[2]Stress is an overall model-fit index designed to select a set of core profiles that best fit the data. According to Kruskal's (1964) recommendation, a set of core profiles should be selected and interpreted when the stress value is .05 or less. This criterion was applied in this analysis, as it had been in previous profile studies (e.g., Frisby & Kim, 2008; S.-K. Kim et al., 2018; McKay et al., 2018; Olatunji et al., 2015).

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Appendix

Intercorrelations of Research Variables

The findings indicate that Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is positively correlated with Sense of Power ($r = .663$, $p < .001$), Self-control ($r = .540$, $p < .001$), LMX ($r = .430$, $p < .001$), and Organizational Support ($r = .567$, $p < .001$). PsyCap is also negatively correlated with both types of conflict: Relationship Conflict ($r = -.279$, $p < .001$) and Task Conflict ($r = -.296$, $p < .001$), as well as with Organizational Politics ($r = -.496$, $p < .001$). Sense of Power shares strong positive correlations with Self-Control ($r = .436$, $p < .001$) and Organizational Support ($r = .566$, $p < .001$). There are significant negative relationships between Sense of Power and Relationship Conflict ($r = -.340$, $p < .001$), Task Conflict ($r = -.304$, $p < .001$), and Organizational Politics ($r = -.517$, $p < .001$). Both Relationship Conflict and Task Conflict are negatively associated with support variables (LMX and Organizational Support) and positively correlated with Organizational Politics (see Table 4). Overall, the results provide evidence for the theorized positive associations between self-control, sense of power, perceptions of workplace support, and PsyCap, while indicating inverse associations with perceived conflict and organizational politics.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Research Variables ($N = 400$)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PsyCap	4.520	0.721	–						
Sense of power	4.700	1.192	.663***	–					
Self-control	3.591	0.644	.540***	.436***	–				
Relationship conflict	1.973	0.839	-.339***	-.340***	-.279***	–			
Task conflict	2.324	0.769	-.287***	-.304***	-.296***	.728***	–		
LMX	3.568	0.923	.430***	.524***	.227***	-.405***	-.337***	–	
Organizational support	3.978	1.242	.567***	.566***	.370***	-.387***	-.298***	.584***	–
Organizational politics	2.709	0.866	-.496***	-.517***	-.361***	.469***	.395***	-.577***	-.669***

Note. Regression Analysis. A multiple linear regression was performed in order to assess the predictive power of sense of power, self-control, relationship conflict, task conflict, LMX, organizational support and organizational politics on PsyCap. All variables were standardized prior to the analysis. The analysis indicated that the predictors account for 55.6% of the variance in PsyCap. Sense of power positively predicted PsyCap, $\beta = .398$, $t = 8.842$, $SE = 0.780$, $p < .001$. Similarly, increased self-control was also associated with greater PsyCap, $\beta = .271$, t = 6.973, $SE = 0.673$, $p < .001$. Lastly, organizational support was a significant positive predictor of PsyCap, $\beta = .197$, $t = 3.920$, $SE = 0.868$, $p < .001$. No significant links were found for relationship conflict, $\beta = -.048$, $t = -0.934$, $SE = 0.896$, $p = .351$, task conflict, $\beta = .028$, $t = 0.571$, $SE = 0.862$, $p = .568$, LMX, $\beta = .009$, $t = 0.204$, $SE = 0.791$, $p = .838$, or organizational politics, $\beta = -.044$, $t = -0.876$, $SE = 0.865$, $p = .381$.
*** $p < .001$.