A Conceptual Examination about the Correlates of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) among the Saudi Arabian Workforce

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Abstract: Psychological capital (PsyCap), which is considered a higher-order construct, is composed of hope, efficacy, optimism, and resilience. The importance of PsyCap stems from the fact that it has the propensity to motivate individuals in their accomplishment of organizational tasks and goals. The concept is related to many behavioral concepts including: subjective well-being, social capital, employee engagement, and emotional intelligence. The majority of the research literature on PsyCap has originated from the West, and limited literature exists about its antecedents and consequences among the Saudi population. Studies undertaken in Saudi Arabia must take into account unique cultural aspects. The present work attempts to identify the contribution that could emerge from the relationship of PsyCap, with constructs like subjective well-being, social capital, and employee engagement, considered through the prism of culture. It also recognizes the influence of, and upon, the external environment. Going beyond the replication of earlier studies, the present work considers the constructs to have a yin-yang relationship. The study presented a model of comprehensive framework emerging from the relevant literature to bring out the complex connections between PsyCap and other constructs. It also emphasized the importance of culture on the identified constructs, and its implication on contribution and performance. The proposed framework needs to be further tested by academics, researchers, and practitioners to confirm its practical implications in industry.

Keywords: psychological capital; PsyCap; subjective well-being; social capital; employee engagement; culture; Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

The concept of psychological capital (PsyCap) is strongly linked to increased well-being (Gautam et al. 2019; Lorenz Timo et al. 2016), job satisfaction (Abbas et al. 2012; Luthans et al. 2007a; Luthans and Youssef 2007; Youssef and Luthans 2007), and life satisfaction (Santisi et al. 2020). Luthans (2002) is seen as the pioneer thinker behind PsyCap, proposing that organizations must address their human capital workforce’s psychological development to establish human capital as a distinct and valuable organizational asset.

This emphasis on human capital’s psychological development is particularly relevant for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the 21st century. Saudi Arabia has seen significant
change since it came into existence in 1932. Particularly after the discovery of massive oil reserves and other natural resources. After that, Saudi society moved rapidly towards higher socio-economic standards and adopted more modern lifestyles (Bowen 2008; Ochsenwald and Fisher 2010), while still cherishing their ancient lineage and civilization. The country has a high human development index (HDI) score, and stands 36th globally and second in the Arab Region. In the last three decades, the HDI value increased 22.8% to 0.857 (UNDP 2019).

In 2016, Saudi Arabia embarked on the ambitious “Vision 2030”, with a commitment to enhance human capital efficiency and provide opportunities for all, recognizing the specific need for a highly motivated, engaged, and change-ready national workforce. The total population of the Kingdom is over 27 million, with a critical consideration being that, while two-thirds of the total population are Saudi nationals, a substantial portion are expatriates who are attracted, and often recruited, from countries all around the world (Central Department of Statistics & Information 2010). Development plans for Saudi Arabia, in particular those from Vision 2030, make considerable demands on the human capital. They promote a new emphasis on identifying and developing local talent rather than recruiting expensive expatriates, and this intent is entirely consistent with the rationale of PsyCap. Our research targets the development of an approach and model framework that will help identify and address a broad range of factors that may enable or constrain organizations, and the Kingdom, in meeting key objectives. We believe that learning from the approach and model framework can assist in designing and delivering a broad range of human capital interventions targeted to meet resource needs unique to the Saudi Arabian culture and work environment. Those interventions include manager training and development, emphasizing the importance of employees as individuals, and capturing and mobilizing those individuals’ relative strengths. The research is based around PsyCap and the related elements of well-being, social capital, engagement, and cultural considerations.

2. Literature Review

For the completion of the present work, the authors adopted a conceptual framework. The directions presented by Gilson et al. (2015) were followed in earnest to complete the work. As a conceptual paper, this study seeks to bridge the available and existing theories, link interdisciplinary knowledge, and present multiple insights to broaden the available literature’s scope. The conceptual framework method has been used very widely across various disciplines. It is also widely used as a useful tool in theory building and modeling.

As a conceptual piece of work, the authors also considered theory building, developing of taxonomies, and clarifying issues and propositions associated with hitherto untested relationships (Gilson et al. 2015; Van de Ven and Poole 1989). As proposed by Weick (1989), the conceptual paper can be linked to a testable hypotheses and can offer a bridging link between validation and usefulness. It can also provide a clear understanding of how the different constructs identified in the study interact. In general, the study’s framework ensures a sensible and straightforward discussion in a particular discipline. In this study, the authors achieved this by critically reviewing the related literature on the different constructs from the Saudi digital library (SDL), a single window that provides the latest literature from all major repositories and publishing houses.

The study proposes a theoretical framework that highlights the relationships and effects of the constructs and makes suggestions for further research.

2.1. Constructs Used for the Study
2.1.1. Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

PsyCap is a core contributor to positive organizational behavior (POB). In introducing POB, Luthans (2002) challenged the often negative approach and perspective adopted by management researchers and practitioners in “trying to fix what is wrong with managers and employees and concentrating on weaknesses” and argued the case for greater positivity.
regarding the psychological strength and capabilities of individuals. The emphasis of POB is, therefore, on the strengths of individuals that could contribute towards more positive outcomes (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan 2017).

The constructs identified by Luthans (2002) as representative of POB, and with implications in the workplace include confidence, self-efficacy, hope, optimism, subjective well-being, and emotional intelligence (Goleman 2004). POB focuses on state-like variables that can be developed within organizational members through workplace interventions and proactive management (Luthans and Youssef 2004; Luthans and Youssef-Morgan 2017). POB approaches have been adopted by human resource (HR) functions in many leading organizations and are represented in a range of HR activities, including learning and development, coaching and mentoring, performance improvement, leadership and followership, and change management. One of the noted practical strengths of PsyCap in POB is that it can be managed and developed, with the scope for objective assessment in terms of enhanced positive psychological capital and securing performance improvement (Luthans and Youssef 2004).

Luthans and Youssef (2004) considered PsyCap as a “higher-order construct”, comprising the constructs of hope, efficacy, optimism, and resilience. Luthans et al. (2007a, p. 3) described PsyCap as “an individual’s positive state of development”, defining PsyCap as:

“an individual’s positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success.”

PsyCap represents the “positive appraisal of circumstances and probability for success based on motivated effort and perseverance” (Luthans et al. 2007a, p. 550). It is seen as relating to the “best self”, going beyond human and social capital (Luthans and Youssef 2004).

The formative constructs of PsyCap are presented in Table 1.

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<th>No</th>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>“Positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals).”</td>
<td>Snyder et al. (1991, p. 287)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td>“The employee’s conviction or confidence about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, or courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context.”</td>
<td>Stajkovic and Luthans (1998, p. 66)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>“A positive outcome outlook or attribution of events, which includes positive emotions and motivation, and has the caveat of being realistic”. “Positive psychological capacity to rebound, to ‘bounce back’ from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change, progress, and increased responsibility.”</td>
<td>(Luthans 2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Luthans 2002, p. 702)</td>
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Law et al. (1998) propose that certain multidimensional constructs could have components related to the underlying core element, with the shared variance/commonality between each facet and the main higher-order factor. PsyCap is identified as one such construct (Luthans et al. 2007a). The common underlying link of the four facets of PsyCap is their outstanding contribution towards the propensity to motivate individuals in their accomplishment of organizational tasks and goals.
PsyCap represents a key psychological resource in the workplace. Investments in PsyCap are argued to be capable of yielding more substantial returns than those offered by other traditional subjects of capital investment (Carmona-Halty et al. 2019; Luthans et al. 2007b; Luthans and Youssef-Morgan 2017; Santisi et al. 2020), with a significant positive effect on a host of desirable workplace attitudes and behaviors (Baluku et al. 2020; Choi and Lee 2014; Larson and Luthans 2006; Song et al. 2020). Those attitudes and behaviors include happiness, positive leadership, appraisal of the available circumstances, motivation, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and work performance (Avey et al. 2009; Avolio and Luthans 2006; Carmona-Halty et al. 2019; McMurray et al. 2010; Norman et al. 2010; Luthans et al. 2007b; Shahnawaz and Jafri 2009). Employees having higher levels of all the four facets of PsyCap (hope, optimism, efficacy, and resilience) are considered much more likely to be able to “weather the storm” than colleagues with lower levels (Luthans et al. 2007b).

PsyCap is positively related to other constructs, including motivation (Avey et al. 2010c; Choi and Lee 2014; Herdem 2019; Luthans et al. 2007a; Walumbwa et al. 2010), employee efficiency (Avey et al. 2010b; Peterson et al. 2011; Sleator 2020), satisfaction (Larson and Luthans 2006), organizational climate (Luthans et al. 2008; Song et al. 2020), and performance (Carmona-Halty et al. 2019). Given its capability to enhance positive cognition and motivation, PsyCap is recognized as a predictor of employee performance (Avey et al. 2010c; Carmona-Halty et al. 2019; Choi and Lee 2014; Luthans et al. 2007a; Walumbwa et al. 2010), and has also been found to relate to innovative behaviors (Abbas and Raja 2011; Li et al. 2020) and creative performance (Sameer 2018; Sweetman et al. 2011; Wang et al. 2021). A study done among oil and petrochemical employees in Saudi Arabia by Idris and Manganaro (2017) found PsyCap to be related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

A further argument in support of PsyCap is that researchers have observed a negative relationship between PsyCap and workplace deviance (Norman et al. 2010; Raza et al. 2019), cynicism, and intention to quit (Avey et al. 2010a; Çelik 2018).

2.1.2. Subjective Well-Being

A significant proportion of employees’ daily lives is spent in the workplace, meaning that employee happiness, or at least satisfaction, reflected in subjective well-being (SWB) is of paramount importance. SWB may be interpreted as individuals’ general “cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives” (Diener 2000, p. 1), with work happiness as “a component in the broad definition of work-related outcomes” (Youssef and Luthans 2007, p. 783).

Early reviews of SWB can be traced to Wilson (1967) and Campbell et al. (1976). Wilson proposed “correlates of avowed happiness,” which has been pathbreaking in the field of SWB. Later, the concept got popularized by Diener (1984), and his work is widely cited and is worth considering even today. The guidance provided by Diener (1984) has helped in triggering multiple empirical examinations about the concept. Theorizing the concept of SWB, Parfit (1984) proposed that well-being theory includes hedonism theory, expectancy theory, and objective list theory. Later, Haybron (2008) proposed five aspects: hedonism, desire, authentic happiness, eudaimonism, and objective theories. Sumner (1996) opines that SWB can be included in the hedonism and desire theories. Eudaimonic well-being is considered to transcend daily life (Kashdan et al. 2008; Sun 2015). Thus, according to Fried (2017), SWB is not merely a scientific concept, but can also be considered a social construct, with philosophical foundations grounded in theoretical sources (Liang et al. 2020).

SWB, considered a multifaceted concept that could lead to greater happiness and meaning, revolves around two traditions, hedonistic and eudaimonic (González et al. 2021; Ryan and Deci 2000). The hedonistic perspective considers well-being as happiness and life satisfaction resulting from the successful pursuit of human desires. Eudaimonic well-being is based on notions of a “life well lived”. Indicators of eudaimonic well-being include a sense of meaning and purpose in life, feelings of autonomy, environmental mastery,
personal growth, positive relations with others, and self-acceptance (Ryff 1989; Ryff and Keyes 1995).

SWB is recognized as being domain-specific (Warr 1990; Choi and Lee 2014). Therefore, it is possible to consider work-related aspects of well-being, such as job satisfaction, mood, and broader emotional states related to an individual’s work or work environment, such as anxiety, happiness, enthusiasm, anger, and fatigue (Daniels 2000; Sironi 2019). The extent of employee engagement is reflected in higher energy levels, resilience, and commitment to work (Kašpárková et al. 2018). Drawing on self-determination theory (SDT), Ryan and Deci (2000) proposed that autonomy, competence, and relatedness were the three essential basic psychological needs critical in fostering wellness.

There is a body of research identifying the positive relationship between PsyCap and well-being (Avey et al. 2010b; Choi and Lee 2014; Culbertson et al. 2010; McMurray et al. 2010; Sabaitytė and Diržytė 2016; Santisi et al. 2020), and PsyCap and happiness at work (Basinska and Rozkwitalska 2020; Choi and Lee 2014; Youssef and Luthans 2007). Choi and Lee (2014) identified the relationship between PsyCap and a number of variables, including turnover intention, work happiness, and broader SWB.

This body of evidence supports the proposition that PsyCap has a positive relationship with SWB (P1).

2.1.3. Social Capital (SC)

Capital is traditionally considered to exist in three forms: economic, cultural, and social (Bourdieu 1986). Social capital (SC) can be seen as the form of capital that produces goods for a common purpose, in which Milana and Maldon (2015) identify the form of a favorable image of nobility. SC in the work environment involves trust, norms, and networking among employees and facilitates coordinated and enhanced collective action among employees (Putnam 2001). Lin (2001, p. 29) defines SC as “resources embedded in a social structure that is accessed and mobilized in purposive actions”. Organizational SC is defined by Leana and Van Buren (1999, p. 538) as “a resource reflecting the character of social relations within an organization”. SC in an organization is seen as a product of its different actors and their social interaction. SC provides a resource to support, improve, and change the infrastructure within organizations, and assist those organizations in addressing and accommodating significant change (Chazon 2009; Cirule and Prusis 2018; Wu et al. 2021).

SC has two dimensions and three levels (Islam et al. 2006; Szreter and Woolcock 2004), which are detailed in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Constituents of social capital (SC).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Particulars</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dimensions (Uphoff 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonding SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridging SC</td>
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<td>Linking SC</td>
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Baker and Dutton (2006) considered SC to have two dimensions—positive and negative. Positive SC includes the personal relationships and connections that organizational members have and the resultant reciprocity. Negative SC is the relationship that could
challenge employee performance. This could include gossip, a lack of collaboration mentality, and a lack of reciprocity. A relatively recent study by Ben-Hador (2019) identified three levels of SC—personal SC, intra-organizational SC, and external SC. Personal SC involves an individual’s profit derived from their particular positioning within the social network. It is the number of social relationships that the member maintains. He empirically proved that simultaneous maintenance of all three is indispensable for the development of social capital within organizations. Intra-organizational SC is the public good (for instance, organizational resource) against a private good (personal resource). This SC develops more cooperative, fecund, and firm relationships in the organization (Kuznetsova and Matveeva 2015), and could contribute to employees and their respective organizations’ development. External SC provides the required support needed to maintain the necessary resources. This SC helps buffer organizations from disruptive environmental influences.

Earlier, SC was an area of study in sociology (Portes 1998). The modern use of SC is attributed to Bourdieu (1983), who suggested that social relationships provided individuals the required quantitative and qualitative access to group members’ resources. There is now increasing interest in SC from management researchers, considering its significance and contributions to organizations (Tantardini and Kroll 2015; Read 2014; Sato 2013; Wagner et al. 2014; Yuwono 2021). As stated above, according to Ben-Hador (2019), SC has three levels: personal, intra-organizational, and external. Each of the three levels has certain unique features, benefits, and risks. He opines that each level strengthens the different components of organizational performance. Personal SC was found to enhance the knowledge and personal power of individuals (Ben-Hador 2016). High levels of SC have been found to offer opportunities for enhanced communication and improved performance in information sharing, teamwork, mutual support, and the judicious allocation of resources, supporting increased levels of job satisfaction and commitment of employees (Cirule and Prusis 2018; Read 2014; Wagner et al. 2014). Some of the benefits of SC include positive reputation, better organizational performance (Leana and Van Buren 1999), and better competitive advantage (Galunic et al. 2012). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) and Parker et al. (2015) proposed that organizations fostering SC by investing in bringing members together would secure and exhibit advantages in performance. Gannon and Roberts (2018) found SC to have a significant association with well-being. Several studies have also found SC to be strongly related to SWB (Helliwell and Putnam 2004; Hommerich and Tiefenbach 2017; Kamarudin et al. 2020).

Based on the established and growing body of evidence, the emerging research proposition is that PsyCap has a positive relationship with SC (P2).

2.1.4. Engagement

How the term “employee engagement” originated is unclear (Bakker and Schaufeli 2015). It is believed to have first been used by the Gallup organization in the early 1990s. Kahn (1990) first conceptualized it as the “harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally, and mentally during role performances” (p. 694). Work engagement is a complex and dynamic emotional process reflecting an individual’s unique psychological state in a strong association with their work situation (Macey and Schneider 2008). Kahn, who has been described as the founding father of engagement, focused on how people expressed themselves verbally, physically, cognitively, and emotionally with their employment (Kahn 1990). Though many social scientists and HR practitioners have attempted to define the concept (MacLeod and Clarke 2009), the most widely used definition of engagement is that proposed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p.74) of “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.” Engaged employees are not passive and put considerable effort into their work, as they tend to identify with it, producing positive outcomes at the individual and organizational levels (Bakker and Schaufeli 2015). The formative variables of work engagement are presented in Table 3.
Table 3. Formative variables of work engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vigor</td>
<td>The inner power of an individual, which motivates energetic action within the workplace. Willingness to discharge individual obligations and duties, understanding their significance with a sense of enthusiasm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Enthusiasm of individuals to be involved and get happily engrossed in their respective works.</td>
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PsyCap has been demonstrated to have a significant positive relationship with work engagement (Avey et al. 2008a; Carmona-Halty et al. 2019). The research literature shows that PsyCap can augment work engagement (Bakker and Oerlemans 2019; Carmona-Halty et al. 2019; Hodges 2010; Qi 2020; Simons and Buitendach 2013; Soni and Rastogi 2019). Adding an extra dimension, Avey et al. (2008a, 2008b) found that positive feelings in the workplace mediate the relationship between PsyCap and attitudes, including work engagement and skepticism. Zhang et al. (2020) found a serial relationship between optimism (a component of PsyCap) and work engagement. The construct was also found to help employees adapt to changes (Parent and Lovelace 2018; Van den Heuvel et al. 2020). Studies by Carmona-Halty et al. (2019) and Datu et al. (2016) found PsyCap to bolster engagement and achievement. Larson et al. (2013) and Xu et al. (2017) reported a positive association between the PsyCap of leaders and their subordinates’ engagement level.

It is thus proposed that there is a positive relationship between PsyCap and work engagement (P3).

2.1.5. Cultural Considerations

Culture may be considered at the national or organizational level. Hofstede describes the national culture in terms of how national societies are built, and the unexamined rules guiding how people think, feel, and act (Hofstede et al. 2010). At the organizational level, culture is generally interpreted as referring to the shared values, attitudes, standards, and beliefs that characterize an organization’s members and define its nature (Benozzo et al. 2019; Schein 1996).

There is substantial evidence that cultural considerations would impact any workforce’s well-being and engagement (Al Shehri et al. 2017; Oishi 2018) and that the impact may be positive or negative (Kotter and Heskett 2011). Hu et al. (2014) found that culture influenced work engagement levels. Further, culture could facilitate economic development depending on which job opportunities are enhanced (Esmail 2019). Research into high-performing organizations references the critical influence of organizational culture on, and from, PsyCap, engagement, well-being, motivation, leadership, and ultimately, performance (de Waal 2007; Boston Consulting Group 2011).

The dimension of culture has not given due importance in most studies. Culture and traditions directly affect a country like Saudi Arabia because of its innumerable uniqueness (Sulphey and Al-Kahtani 2017; Sulphey 2019). Saudi culture is distinctive and has a pivotal role in people’s daily lives (Aljammaz et al. 2019). Some of the Saudi culture’s uniqueness includes the reliance on a state religion—Islam, and the predominantly prevalent tribal social system and identity. In Saudi Arabia, Islam guided by the Holy Quran and Sunnah (the Prophet’s sayings—peace be upon him) dictates the moral and ethical principles and social behaviors (Kabasakal and Bodur 2002). This aligns with Hofstede’s (1998) proposition that morality could originate from religious beliefs.

Many social scientists have identified the propensity of culture and identity exerting considerable influence on the social system (Bagozzi 2007; Hofstede 1998; Kabasakal and Bodur 2002; Sulphey 2019). This is severe among Arab cultures (Agourram 2009; Hill et al. 1998; Saleem et al. 2019; Vörös and Choudrie 2011; Waxin et al. 2020), resulting in conflicts in organizations. Further, a form of strict hierarchical culture has been found to exist in Saudi Arabian organizations (Alkahtani et al. 2013; Sulphey and Al-Kahtani 2018). Several studies have also found that Saudi Arabian leaders adopt duality, which includes both consultation and directive management (Al-Yahya 2008; Saleem et al. 2019; Sagie and Aycan...
This uniqueness has prompted researchers (for instance, Al-Shehry et al. (2006); AlSheddi et al. (2020); Bjerke and Al-Meer (1993); etc.) to propose that in countries like Saudi Arabia, while undertaking organizational behavior studies, there is a definite need to provide due consideration to the cultural uniqueness and characteristics. This is because the value system and the general environment would have a profound influence on the workplace. The present work thus proposes viewing organizational behavior research through the prism of cultural dimension. The next proposition is culture has a direct relationship with PsyCap and situational factors (P4).

3. Theoretical Underpinnings

Theoretical support for the listed propositions and the emerging model was provided by drawing from psychological resource theory (PST) (Hobfoll 2002) and key resource theories (KRT) (Thoits 1994). Other theories include social cognitive theory (SCT) and job-demands-resources theory (Bandura 2020; López-Nuñez et al. 2020). PST proposes considering individual assets as being formed from a hidden core construct or a set of resources, while KRT views resources as those which are considered as management resources. Resources, as referred to in this theory, are very broad. Initially, they were considered to include anything that holds value to any individual (Hobfoll 1989, 2002). Later on, the definition of resources was further broadened to refer to everything that a person perceives to help them perform, which could include individual goals, personality traits, or even environmental conditions (Bakker and De Vries 2020; Bakker and Demerouti 2017, 2018; Gorgievski et al. 2011a, 2011b; Halbesleben et al. 2014). In a recent study, López-Nuñez et al. (2020) attributed the malleability of PsyCap to SCT. According to them, PsyCap emerged because of self-control and self-efficacy concepts presented in SCT.

An additional consideration is that key resource elements, for example, PsyCap, SWB, and engagement, have been empirically found to have an interactive and synergistic effect (Cozzarelli 1993; Rini et al. 1999; Santisi et al. 2020). Multiple resources theories (MRTs) advocate the emergence of synergies, where the outcomes from the interplay of the different contributing resource elements would be greater than the sum of those elements (Antonovsky 1979).

4. The Case for Further Research

The majority of the research literature on PsyCap has originated from the US and Western world (Choi and Lee 2014; Larson et al. 2013; Luthans et al. 2007a, 2007b; Santisi et al. 2020), South Africa (Simons and Buitendach 2013); China (Luthans et al. 2008), India (Soni and Rastogi 2019), Turkey (Çetin and Basim 2011), and South Korea (Choi and Lee 2014). Scant literature exists about the antecedents and consequences of PsyCap among the Saudi population.

In addition to filling this literature gap, this paper intended to go beyond the replication of earlier studies into PsyCap and related constructs. The intention was to adopt a comprehensive framework model emerging from the relevant literature to confirm the complex connections between PsyCap and other constructs, including culture, and their collective implications on contribution and performance. As stated earlier, the cultural dimension has not been provided the required focus in earlier works. It is proposed that organizational behavior studies conducted in Saudi Arabia need to contribute to the cultural dimension. Further, the demands of Vision 2030 will have considerable implications for the workforce in Saudi Arabia and the institutions engaged in providing essential training and development and broader guidance. The proposed research, guided and underpinned by a relevant model, can assist in informing and supporting initiatives to meet the Vision’s demands. There is substantial research evidence for recognizing that the constructs presented in this paper are culture-dependent (Firouzbakht et al. 2018), and therefore, further research concerning the Saudi workforce should take this into account.

The proposed model (Figure 1) is dynamic in recognizing that PsyCap and its components influence, and in turn, are influenced by other constructs. These constructs influence
the culture that enables or constrains those constructs’ contributions at the organizational and national levels. The other consideration in the model is that it is essential to consider the implications and impact of external factors. External factors relate to macro-level events, for example, significant changes in the economy linked to global concerns for climate change have implications for the scale and required competencies of the national and organizational workforces. Thus, it is proposed that “external forces mediate the relationship between PsyCap, situational factors, and contribution/performance outcomes” (P5).

We believe that external factors’ influence has been under-researched in previous studies and may be especially significant for individuals and organizations in particular industries at particular times. Traditional management training and development interventions may provide generic content to participant communities crossing different industries. Our proposed model recognizes that the impact of even top-quality management training and development may be mitigated, or enhanced, by the filter of external factors, with implications for the eventual contribution.

5. Implications
5.1. Theoretical Implications

The present work contributes substantially to management literature as it integrates various aspects—PsyCap and certain situational factors like well-being, social capital, and employee engagement; by drawing inputs from psychological resource theory (PST), key resource theory (KRT), and job-demands-resources theory. These factors are superimposed on the broader backdrop of culture, which scholars have generally ignored. This work also offers further insights into the synergistic probabilities of PsyCap and the situational factors. Taking a cue from several studies, for instance, Abubakar et al. (2019) proposed an implied relationship between employee emotions at work and the cultural underpinnings. The emotions at work need to be viewed through the prism of culture prevalent in each nation or society. Culture is supposed to play a vital role in boosting healthy employee emotions and enhancing PsyCap, resulting in a robust work environment. These could further help achieve a host of desirable employee outcomes, including increased innovative behaviors and resultant employee contribution/performance (Li et al. 2020; Wang et al. 2021). The impact of cultural context on PsyCap could be a fecund area for future research.

As claimed by many social scientists, for instance, White and Bryson (2013), it can be considered that appropriate investments in human capital in general, and in the factors stated in the present work, would manifest as contributions or positive work outcomes. Another proposition is that certain external factors would mediate the impact and magnitude of employee contributions. It has also been posited that there is a definite need to
acknowledge the importance of external factors on performance outcomes and contributions. Any failure to accord due priority to external factors would backfire and lead to adverse results on the positive steps initiated to boost employee attitudes and emotions. This could ultimately manifest as psychological exhaustion of employees, resulting in unwanted outcomes. Therefore, there is a need to consider the influence of external factors that were hitherto not provided due importance during conceptualizations.

5.2. Practical Implications

The present paper has immense possibilities for practical contributions. It is argued that the combination of yin and yang (duality of contrary forces acting as both complementary and interdependent) that PsyCap and situational factors would bring in a work environment, which would generate the resources needed for positive work-related contributions/outcomes. This work is consistent with the idea that individuals who have subjective well-being and are engaged are more productive (Huang et al. 2015). Further, the constructs of PsyCap and the situational factors considered in this study are highly effective in counterbalancing undesirable work attitudes (Abubakar et al. 2019). Practitioners need to design programs that support and balance individual emotions at the workplace, with due importance given to the cultural aspects. In addition to other aspects, employees can be hired on the basis of their emotional outlooks and higher levels of PsyCap. They can also be offered “restorative techniques” such as training programs that are culturally sensitive (Baltes et al. 2014; Mostafa 2017).

Though the proposed framework is based on the literature review, it is expected to shed light on the importance of cultural dimension on organizational behavior constructs, especially in the Saudi context. The framework is of deep interest to social scientists, organizational behavior researchers, and practitioners. It needs to be further tested by academics, researchers, and practitioners to identify its practical implications in industry. It is expected that the present work can act as a trigger for further research explorations in this exciting area.

Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia offers a significant opportunity to capture learning, regarding PsyCap and the broader culture and ways of working, as suggested in our proposed model framework, and to project this learning in the recruitment, training, and development of the national workforce. We propose research projects assessing and comparing experience and outcomes from human capital programs delivered in different industries.

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