

Effect of Psychological Capital on Nurses' Performance: Job Embeddedness as Mediated Role

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Abstract

Background: Psychological capital was recently identified as a core construct in the literature of positive psychology. However, there is considerably less evidence of its positive effects on job embeddedness and performance among nursing personnel. The study aimed to explore the relationships between psychological capital, nurses' performance, and job embeddedness. **Subjects and Methods: Design:** A correlational descriptive research design was utilized to conduct this study. **Setting:** The study was applied in the Medical Department at Port Said Hospital. **Sample:** A convenience sample that included 50 nurses who were working in the previously mentioned settings. **Four tools of data collection:** (I) Demographic data assessment, (II) Psychological capital (PC) questionnaire, (III) Job embeddedness (JE) scale, and (IV) Employee performance (EP) questionnaire. **Results:** They revealed that a strong relationship was detected between psychological capital, nurses' performance, and job embeddedness. **Conclusion:** It was concluded that higher psychological capital increases nurses' performance and job embeddedness. Job embeddedness significantly mediates the link between psychological capital and nurses' performance. **Recommendations:** the current study suggested improving psychological capital among nurses to increase nurses' performance and job embeddedness. Providing new insights into the mechanism by offering practical and theoretical perceptions about psychological capital and employee performance in the healthcare sector can be helpful to all medical administrators and supporting professionals.

Keywords: Job embeddedness, Nurses' performance, Psychological capital.

Introduction

Research on nursing performance has drawn more attention recently, particularly studies of phenomena that emerge after compiling data on the independent variables that influence nursing performance. The performance of nurses is negatively impacted by several independent variables, according to research. These include anxiety, despair, emotional tiredness, tension, dissatisfaction, and the intention to leave the company (Kowalski et al., 2017).

The study of ideal human performance is known as positive psychology. It focuses on well-being and ideal performance and tries to widen the scope of clinical psychology beyond immediately addressing misery. In human resource

management, the significance of positivity has become more widely acknowledged (Luthans et al. 2017). The relationship between positive psychology and factors like job satisfaction, motivation, productivity, job performance, well-being, organizational commitment, positive affectivity, core self-evaluations, organizational citizenship, intrinsic motivation, humour, self-determination, and organizational justice is well supported across a variety of fields (Sin & Lyubomirsky 2019). Positive psychology's usefulness is backed up by the development of successful solutions. There is a growing emphasis on human capabilities and ideal functioning in "positive psychology," which is a new trend. Martin Seligman, a proponent, said: "I hope that a psychology of positive human functioning will emerge that achieves a

scientific understanding and practical interventions to develop thriving individuals, families, and societies." (Seligman, 2012).

Self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience are four elements that make up a person's psychological capital, which is their good psychological state. Self-efficacy is the conviction that one can handle difficult tasks. Making an optimistic acknowledgment is essential to ensuring both now and future success. When faced with challenges and obstacles, resilience is needed to persevere and recover to achieve success. Hope is a motivation for goals to prosper. Happier employees are better able to handle problems at work, which subsequently improves their performance outcomes (Peterson et al., 2016).

Even though studies have shown that job embeddedness affects employee performance, it may be thought of as an anti-withdrawal idea. Using the conservation of resource theory, researchers hypothesize that job embeddedness is a state of abundance (Wheeler, 2012). They contend that job embedding promotes performance since resources are available as a result of their involvement with the workplace. The connection between job embedding and performance is influenced by numerous factors (Bapna et al., 2013). Employees who feel fit in their positions, connected to coworkers and projects, and willing to make sacrifices to keep the things they value if they leave are probably driven to succeed (Tian et al., 2016).

Involvement in social activities within an organization is referred to as job embeddedness (Holtom, 2016). Therefore, workers who are committed to their jobs are typically unwilling to leave the company. Off-the-job and on-the-job embedding are the two categories that make up job embedding. On-the-Job embedding, according to academics, refers to people who are actively involved in their organizations, whilst Off-the-Job embedding refers to those who are deeply ingrained in their communities. Links, sacrifice, and fit are the three categories' three dimensions (Shields et al., 2015).

Performance can be summed up as a person's effectiveness in carrying out their obligations and responsibilities (Schechner, 2017). Performance is seen as feelings and traits related to an individual's work in the organizational study. The most important resource and the core of any firm is its workforce (Hewagama et al., 2019). Through empirical investigations, it is crucial to identify the factors associated with employee performance. Employee sentiment and job perception are strongly correlated with employee performance (Li et al., 2017). Employee performance is influenced by a variety of psychological and environmental factors. Numerous studies have noted that employee performance is frequently examined in a supportive environment. (Khan et al., 2014).

Employee performance is measured by how much is produced after actions are taken on inputs. It is the result of the activities that take place within the organization (Buil et al., 2019). In today's business and service world, employee performance is a fascinating topic. It is a function of knowledge, skills, aptitude, inspiration, and formal job obligations. Every single employee's effectiveness in their activities is what helps the organization achieve its goals. For policy to be implemented and for the organization to achieve its strategic goals, effective employee performance management is essential (Nazir & Islam, 2017).

A new barrier to employee motivation has recently been apparent to an increasing number of managers. New management goals and a new social context are a challenge for modern firms. Psychological capital is a novel notion that has expanded the study of and practice human resource management. It will be a necessary decision for improving management effectiveness and satisfaction (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). A significant issue in several nations is the nursing shortage, hence nursing research frequently addresses the issue of turnover. A novel concept called "job embedding" was created to capture a more complete picture of the employee-employer relationship than is generally portrayed by attitudinal indicators like commitment or satisfaction. It is a

comprehensive design that encapsulates all of the factors that prevent people from quitting their jobs. It encapsulates the totality of a person's psychological, social, and occupational justifications for remaining employed. It has three dimensions: fit, links, and sacrifice, and it represents a wide range of factors that affect employee retention (Buil et al., 2019).

Operational definition:

- **Psychological capital:** is characterized by high levels of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency. It is the positive and developmental condition of an individual.
- **Job embeddedness:** represents a new way of looking at how organizations behave, and it may be built and upheld by paying close attention to the connections that employees make to people, organizations, and activities both inside and outside the company (Hewagama et al., 2019).

Significance of the study:

Different emotional and psychological processes are involved in both staying at a job and leaving one. According to prior research, job embeddedness is a more effective predictor of workplace outcomes than some psychological factors that are more widely known and acknowledged, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, such as employee attendance, retention, and performance. Higher psychological capital makes nurses more able to adapt to their nursing work, have more harmonious interactions with their coworkers, and have more friends and deeper connections inside the company. In sum, it argues that Psychological capital increases the job embeddedness of nurses, which in turn improves their performance (Buil et al., 2019). Hence, the study aimed to explore the relationships between psychological capital, nurses' performance, and job embeddedness.

Aim of the study:

The study aimed to explore the relationships between psychological capital, nurses' performance, and job embeddedness.

Research questions:

- What is the effect of psychological capital on nurses' performance?
- What is the effect of psychological capital on job embeddedness?
- What is the effect of job embeddedness on nurses' performance?
- Does job embeddedness mediate the relationship between psychological capital and affect performance?

Research Hypotheses:

- (1) Psychological capital is associated positively with the level of job embeddedness.
- (2) Job embedding has a good impact on nurses' performance.
- (3) Job embeddedness acts as a mediator in the association between psychological capital and nursing performance.

Subjects and methods:

Research Design:

A correlational descriptive research design was utilized to conduct this study

Setting:

The study was applied in the Medical Department at Port Said Hospital.

The subjects:

A convenience sample included 50 nurses who were working in the previously mentioned settings.

Tools of Data Collection:

Four tools were used to collect the data for the study as the following:

Tool I: Demographic data assessment sheet, comprised of demographic questions (e.g. age, gender, years of experience, and educational level).

Tool II: Psychological capital (PC) scale:

A 24-item scale was used, and it was developed by Luthans et al. With six questions for each of the four components (efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism), PCQ had a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.88$) and acceptable confirmatory factor analytic structure across several samples. Examples of items on this scale are "At the moment, I am actively pursuing my professional goals" (hope), "I can get through challenging times at work because I have encountered challenging times before" (resiliency), "I feel comfortable approaching people outside the company (such as suppliers or customers) to discuss problems" (self-efficacy), and "When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best" (optimism). Each of the four subscales' six responses was added together and averaged to produce a subscale composite, which was then used to calculate the overall psychological capital score to get a subscale composite average.

Tool III: Job embeddedness:

The seven-item scale created by Crossley et al. (2007), which included statements like "I feel attached to this organization," was used to quantify it. We performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to investigate employment embeddedness because it is still relatively new. All test items significantly ($P < 0.001$) loaded on the one factor. It was demonstrated that the device accurately and completely suited the data. It had high internal dependability ($\alpha = 0.82$).

Tool IV: Employee performance scale:

Employee performance can be thought of as a multifaceted concept. It is evaluated using a Williams and Anderson-created 5-item scale (1991). It placed a strong emphasis on task performance, which is defined as actions that "are recognized by formal reward systems and are part of the requirements as outlined in job descriptions." It employed the Williams and Anderson five-item scale to assess in-role performance (example: "I effectively completed my tasks and responsibilities regarding the hospital's proposal assignment"). In this investigation, the

scales' alpha reliability was 0.86.

Validity of the tools:

The content validity of the tools, their clarity, comprehensiveness, appropriateness, and relevance were reviewed by five expert professors in Nursing Administration. Modifications were made according to the panel judgment to ensure sentence clarity and content appropriateness.

Reliability of the tools:

The six items used to evaluate psychological capital produced a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.951, which is higher than 0.7, indicating very high reliability for the PC. Seven questions were used to measure job embeddedness, yielding a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.942, which is higher than 0.7; this indicates that dependability is quite good. Five items used to measure employee performance yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.932, which is higher than 0.7, and a very high-reliability rating for EP.

Ethical considerations

Written consent was obtained from the directors of the previously mentioned setting after explaining the aim of the study. Consent was obtained from the nurses before starting the study and a brief introduction to the study's objectives was explained, the researchers informed the participants that, the study was voluntary, they were allowed to refuse to participate and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving any reason, declarations of anonymity, confidentiality.

Statistical analysis:

The data were analyzed using a descriptive approach to understand the demographic characteristics of the participants. Descriptive statistics included frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis. Scale reliability was tested by calculating items for total correlation coefficients and Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale. As a result, the p-value was deemed significant as follows: P-values of ≤ 0.05 were considered significant, P-values of ≤ 0.01 were

considered highly significant, and P-values of >0.05 were considered insignificant.

Results:

Table (1) shows that 50% of the studied nurses were between 20 and < 30 years old with a mean of 20-50, and 68% of the studied nurses were female. Slightly less than half of the studied nurses (48%) have a diploma from secondary nursing school. Regarding years of experience, 40% of the studied nurses have >5 years of experience.

Table (2) shows that there were positive relationships between psychological capital, job embeddedness, and performance and variables such as age, gender, and years of experience. Job embeddedness mediated the relationship between psychological capital and nursing performance. There was a significant correlation between psychological capital and job embeddedness demonstrates a significant link. Employee performance and job embeddedness showed a substantial association, according to the data. There was a significant association between psychological capital and worker performance, as indicated by the correlation coefficient.

Table 3 displays the overall, direct, and indirect effects that independent variables have on dependent variables. The relationship between psychological capital and performance is significantly mediated by job embeddedness. Performance and job embeddedness are both directly and indirectly correlated with psychological capital (mediated via job embeddedness, total $B = <0.58$, $P <0.001$), and psychological capital is also inversely correlated with performance ($B = <0.05$, $P <0.001$) and job embeddedness ($B = <0.36$, $P <0.001$). Job embeddedness and performance are directly correlated ($B = <0.13$, $P <0.001$).

Table (1): Percentage distribution of the studied nurses regarding their demographic data

Variables.	The Studied Nurses (n=50)	
	N	%
Age:		
• 20 < 30	25	50.0
• 30 < 40	14	28.0
• ≥40	11	22.0
Mean 20-57		
Gender:		
• Male	16	32.0
• Female	34	68.0
Qualification:		
• Nursing Diploma.	24	48.0
• Bachelor of nursing.	16	32.0
• Master of nursing.	13	26.0
Years of experience:		
• < 5	20	40.0
• <10	15	30.0
• >10	15	30.0

Table 2 Means (M), standard deviations (SD), internal consistencies (a), and correlations among variables

Variables	M	SD	A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	10
Age	29.03	7.11	—	1									
Gender	—	—	—	0.09*	1								
Years of experience	7.93	7.57	—	0.96**	-0.10	1							
psychological capital	3.55	0.41	0.88	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.82**	0.86**	0.80**	0.70**	1		
Job embeddedness	2.43	0.47	0.81	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.25**	0.29**	0.21**	0.27**	0.32**	1	
Performance	3.94	0.55	0.86	0.09*	-0.03	0.10**	0.48**	0.42**	0.41**	0.33**	0.52**	0.31**	1

* $P < 0.05$ (one-tailed test); ** $P < 0.01$ (two-tailed test).

Table 3: Relationships between total, direct, and indirect effects of psychological capital, job embeddedness, and nurses' performance

Independent variable	Performance	Job embeddedness
psychological capital	—	—
Direct effect	0.53**	0.36**
Indirect effect	0.05**	—
Total effect	0.58**	—
Job embeddedness	—	—
Direct effect	0.13**	—
Indirect effect	—	—
Total effect	—	—

** $P < 0.01$ (two-tailed test).

Discussion:

According to the study's findings, more than two-thirds of the nurses were female and half of the nurses evaluated were between the ages of 20 and 30. This finding conflict with a study by **Tao et al. (2011)** entitled "The Impact of Psychological Capital on Job Embeddedness and Job Performance among Nurses," which found that the study group's mean age was 29 years old, with a range of 18-58 years, and that the majority of the participants were female.

The results of the current study showed a significant correlation between employee performance and psychological capital. According to the study, a person's psychological resources are reflected by their psychological capital, and people with high levels of psychological capital are better able to bounce up and move on when faced with challenges at work. Raising psychological capital makes a nurse more capable of doing their job well. When a worker encounters the main challenge, he or she might recover from the setback and see the challenge as a growing lesson. High amounts of psychological capital might also indicate an employee's successful performance at work.

The results corroborate a study by **Alessandri et al. (2018)** entitled "Testing a dynamic model of the impact of psychological capital on work engagement and job performance," which found a substantial positive association between psychological capital and employee performance. The study by **Luthans & Jensen (2015)**, which examined "The linkage between psychological capital and commitment to the corporate mission" and discovered that psychological capital is favorably associated with nursing performance, is comparable to this conclusion in that regard. Utility analysis has already been used to demonstrate that increasing psychological capital can bring in more than \$10 million

annually for businesses (**Luthans et al. 2016**). This is why nurses' performance can be significantly enhanced by having a positive psychological outlook. The results were in accordance with the previous studies (**Afsar et al., 2018**).

This finding is consistent with a study by **Avey et al. (2019)**, "Meta-analysis of the impact of positive psychological capital on employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance," which discovered that workers with higher psychological capital have higher organizational commitment and less intention to leave their jobs.

Additionally, the findings of **Gooty et al. (2009)**'s the study "In the eyes of the beholder: Transformational leadership, positive psychological capital, and performance" are in line with this one. They discovered that psychological capital refers to an individual's essential psychological resource in the form of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy that provides energy to perform successfully (**Sweetman et al., 2017**). Positivity is about a positive outlook on work, self-efficacy is about having faith in one's abilities and making use of the resources required to complete the assignment, and resilience is about one's willpower in the face of difficulties. These four concepts are interconnected to help one work successfully (**Avey et al., 2016**).

In the study of effective organizational behavior, psychological capital has emerged as a crucial component (**Avey et al., 2010**). Optimism, efficacy, hope, and resilience are examples of positive psychological paradigms that boost a person's motivational propensity, which is often referred to as psychological capital (**Luthans et al., 2017**). Previous research revealed that psychological capital significantly influences expectations for employee performance (**Peterson et al., 2016**).

The results of this study showed that job embeddedness is highly influenced by psychological capital. According to the

researchers, this outcome shows that employees with strong psychological capital are those that have stronger ties to the firm, such as good

relationships with their coworkers. According to the researchers, this outcome underscores the need for employees to build strong psychological resources and positive energy, which improve employee performance. Additionally, these tools serve as a buffer against common workplace difficulties that have a detrimental impact on employee performance (Gooty et al., 2009).

The findings of the present investigation agree with earlier studies (Fang & Lu, 2016). It is concluded from the current findings that improving each nurse's psychological condition will affect their level of job embedding. These findings are consistent with a study by Karatepe & Karadas (2015) who discovered that workers with high levels of psychological capital had positive working relationships and conditions. Similarly to this, multiple research supported the notion that employees are more embedded in their jobs due to their psychological capital (Sun et al., 2018).

The results of this study showed how strongly job embeddedness affects employee performance. According to the study, job embedding explains how factors like social capital and job success develop. Because job embeddedness is seen as a core feature that predicts employee performance, nurses who are in a happy psychological state are more connected to and invested in their work, which enhances their performance.

These findings were corroborated by Holtom & Inderrieden (2016), who investigated "Integrating the unfolding model and job embeddedness model to better understand voluntary turnover" and discovered that job embeddedness is a combination of a worker's connections to others, fit with the organization and community, and the amount of

sacrifice required to change jobs. The causes behind an employee's decision to stay at their current position are discussed.

Additionally, researchers discovered that job embedding affects work-related behaviors like turnover, absenteeism, performance, and civic engagement (Ng & Feldman, 2019). Job embeddedness also has a significant impact on workplace activities like employee performance, commitment, and turnover intentions (Wheeler, 2012). Additional studies have revealed that employee performance is boosted by embeddedness (Lee et al., 2014).

Sekiguchi et al. (2018) predict that aspects of job embeddedness will have a favorable impact on employee performance. A crucial component of job embeddedness, employee fit with the organization will lead to successful work outcomes. Additionally, there is research showing a connection between employee performance and job embedding (Karatepe & Karadas, 2015).

The findings of the current study showed that the relationship between psychological capital and employee performance is mediated by work embeddedness. This, in the opinion of the researchers, demonstrated the significance of Job embeddedness is regarded as a source that employees admire. Employees will get more ingrained in their employment if they receive rewards and recognition and have positive working relationships. According to earlier studies, job embeddedness is a more powerful predictor of workplace outcomes like employee retention, attendance, and performance (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2016). According to the results of another study, work embeddedness is a predictor of performance (Sun et al., 2018). However, in circumstances where employees are more embedded on the job, nurses with higher psychological capital are more adaptive to their job, which helps to reduce the impact of negative events and improve their performance (Burton et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Based on the results and hypotheses of the present study, the study findings concluded that higher psychological capital increases nurses' performance and job embeddedness. Job embeddedness significantly mediates the link between psychological capital and nurses' performance

Recommendations:

Based on the current study results, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Improving psychological capital among nurses to increase nurses' performance and job embeddedness.
- Giving medical administrators and assisting professionals a new understanding of the mechanism by delivering theoretical and practical perspectives on psychological capital and worker performance in the healthcare industry might be beneficial.
- Replication of the current study with a larger sample of nurses in different settings is required for generalizing the results.

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