

The Role of Psychological Capital, Subjective Well-Being, and Work Engagement in Improving the Performance of Manufacturing Industry Employees

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Abstract

Good human resource management can be leveraged to ensure a company's success. This study aims to determine the relationship between psychological capital, subjective well-being, work engagement, and employee performance. Data was collected by distributing questionnaires to 407 employees of steel billet and iron rod manufacturing companies in Jakarta. The collected data was then analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This study found that high psychological capital is able to improve work engagement and employee performance, but not subjective well-being; high work engagement is able to improve employee performance and subjective well-being, and high employee performance is able to improve subjective well-being. Furthermore, this study found that psychological capital affects subjective well-being mediated by work engagement, while psychological capital does not affect employee performance mediated by work engagement.

Keywords

Psychological capital; work engagement; employee performance; subjective well-being; steel billet and iron rod manufacturing



I. Introduction

The rapid changes in the industrial world have resulted in increasingly fierce competition between industries, including steel billet and iron rod factories. Currently, they have to compete with cheap imported products. Therefore, they need a strategy to survive in difficult conditions. Human resource management can be the first step in this regard. Good human resource management is in line with good performance results. This is important because in the end, employee performance becomes a benchmark for a company's level of success (Sidabutar, Syah, & Anindita, 2020). In a work environment, only positive, proactive, and resilient employees can perform better (Gupta & Shaheen, 2017). Psychological capital as an element of positive behavior has been proven to improve employee attitudes and work results (S. Chen, 2015).

Psychological capital focuses on improving people's lives (Luthans et al., 2007). Psychological capital is one of the personal resources that keep employees positive, confident, hopeful, optimistic, and resilient at work (Avey et al., 2010). Psychological capital is useful for achieving goals, which will eventually result in better performance (Lupsa & Virga, 2020). Employees who are oriented to psychological capital will have an impact on building corporate identity (Singhal et al., 2018). Companies need to manage employees' personal resources to foster positive and confident behavior, which will increase their engagement with their duties in the company (Chen, 2015).

Employee engagement can help companies gain a competitive advantage. Baumruk and Solutions (2020) suggested that employee engagement is considered the most powerful factor in measuring company strength. Work engagement will encourage employees to explore, learn new skills, and process new information (Chughtai and Buckley, 2014). According to Anitha (2013), there is a strong and significant relationship between employee engagement and employee performance in an organization. Organization must have a goal to be achieved by the organizational members (Niati et al., 2021). The success of leadership is partly determined by the ability of leaders to develop their organizational culture. (Arif, 2019). Employee engagement is dependent on psychological capital, as without its employee engagement cannot be improved (Kang and Busser, 2018). Furthermore, Hu, Cui, & Wang, (2016) found that high work engagement can increase work efficiency and positive emotions, which then leads to an increase in subjective well-being.

Employees who have high work engagement and are satisfied with their careers tend to be happy, which in turn makes them more active, more approach-oriented, more energetic, more sympathetic to coworkers, and more persistent in dealing with work difficulties (Joo and Lee, 2017). Subjective Well-being (SWB) refers to an evaluation of the life of a person rather than a momentary mood (Singhal, 2018; Psychol et al., 2016).

Several previous studies have suggested a significant direct relationship between psychological capital, well-being (Avey et al., 2010), and performance (Luthans, 2002). Psychological capital significantly affects the subjective well-being of Indian employees (Singhal, 2018). Psychological capital has also been shown to positively and significantly affect employee engagement at factories in Zimbabwe (Ngwenya & Pelsler, 2020). Work engagement also significantly affects the subjective well-being of teachers and the performance of telecommunication company employees (SWB, Cho 2021; performance, Chen 2015). Several previous studies focused on the influence of psychological capital on antecedents and outcomes such as performance rather than mediators (Imran and Shahnawaz, 2020; Newman, Ucbasaran, Zhu, and Hirst, 2014). To fill the gap, this study designates work engagement as a mediator. This study takes the steel billet and iron rod factory as the object of the study, further differentiating it from previous studies. Finally, this study aims to determine the effect of psychological capital on employee performance and subjective well-being in a steel billet and iron rod factory, with work engagement as a mediator.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Relationship between Psychological Capital and Employee Performance

High psychological capital enables people to deal with increasing demands and pressures (Nafei, 2015). Psychological capital (hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience) comes from personal strengths and qualities, and it is believed that psychological capital is able to increase the initiative, energy, and self-discipline needed to achieve the goals of an individual (Luthans, Luthans, and Luthans, 2004; Luthans et al., 2007; Youssef and Luthans, 2007). Psychological capital acts as a motivation to work better in order to achieve certain goals, which leads to better performance (Rabenu et al., 2016). According to Ngwenya and Pelsler (2020), a human resource management strategy focusing on psychological capital can optimize employee performance for the company's competitive advantage. This study seeks to expand previous studies by covering various aspects of performance such as task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual

performance as proposed by Pradhan and Jena (2017). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Psychological capital has a positive effect on employee performance.

2.2 Relationship between Psychological Capital and Subjective Well-being

Psychological capital helps build positive attributions in relation to challenging work goals (Singhal, 2018). Psychological capital resources lead to positive emotions, which are parts of subjective well-being (Rabenu et al., 2016). Positive psychological capital resources will have a significant impact on subjective well-being, in which the higher the psychological capital resources, the better the subjective well-being (Li, Guo, Xu, Yu, & Zhou, 2014). Psychological capital is not only a significant predictor of work engagement but also subjective well-being (Joo & Lee, 2017). This study argues that psychological capital can strengthen the potential value of different perspectives, leading to a better condition which will in turn improve employee well-being. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Psychological capital has a positive effect on subjective well-being

2.3 Relationship between Psychological Capital and Work Engagement

Work engagement is theorized to be a high-level key factor consisting of three interrelated constructs, and it is said that employees with high self-efficacy will have high work engagement and are willing to put more effort into each given task, resulting in better performance (Tian, Wang, Zhang, & Wen, 2019). Lupsa & Virga, (2020) stated that social workers who have psychological capital tend to feel more attached to their work and are more willing to devote themselves to their tasks and work. Psychological capital is also potential positive psychology that can increase employee work engagement (Chen, 2015). Ngwenya and Pelsler (2020) stated that the higher the psychological capital, the higher the employee engagement. This study argues that employees with high psychological capital tend to have more self-efficacy and resilience, which makes them feel more appreciated and optimistic in achieving their goals. Thus, the employees will be motivated to focus more on work. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Psychological capital has a positive effect on work engagement

2.4 Relationship between Work Engagement and Employee Performance

Employee engagement, a positive phenomenon filled with meaning, motivation, passion, and vitality, is characterized by dedication to the organization (W. Schaufeli et al., 2002). The relationship between work engagement and employee performance can be found in several empirical studies. Employees who feel attached to their work are more likely to develop new ideas and ways of working that are not only beneficial for the organization but also for other colleagues (Diyanto, Susanti, & Syah, 2019). In addition, employee engagement also directly or indirectly affects performance (Chughtai and Buckley, 2014), both task performance and contextual performance (Awan, Habib, & Akhtar, 2020). Hu, Cui, & Wang, (2016) suggested that employees with high work engagement tend to be more persistent and more positive at work, which makes it easier for them to achieve good performance. In addition, high work engagement also reflects high interest and determination in facing every challenge and achieving goals, which ultimately lead to better performance (Cho, 2021). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Work engagement has a positive effect on employee performance

2.5 Relationship between Work Engagement and Subjective Well-being

Positive psychology emphasizes that the balance between positive and negative emotions reflects subjective well-being. Employees with high engagement in their work are considered to be the recipients of various psychological benefits which in turn can improve their well-being (Cho, 2021). This is further confirmed by an empirical analysis showing that work engagement is correlated with the work efficiency of school principals, which ultimately has an impact on positive emotions and subjective well-being of school principals (Hu et al., 2016). Few studies have investigated the relationship between work engagement and subjective well-being. For this reason, this study argues that employees with high work engagement are more likely to feel happy. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H5: Work engagement has a positive effect on subjective well-being

2.6 Relationship between Employee Performance and Subjective Well-being

Employees who are motivated to perform better tend to have higher self-confidence, which then leads to happiness and pleasure (Cho, 2021). Employees who perform well have a greater chance of properly addressing current situations, avoiding stressful situations in the future, and coping with high work demands (Huang, Amber, Lee, Chen, & Hsiehthors, 2018). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H6: Employee performance has a positive effect on subjective well-being

In this study, psychological capital acts as the independent variable, employee performance and subjective well-being as the dependent variable, and work engagement as the mediating variable. The conceptual framework of this study can be seen in Figure 1.

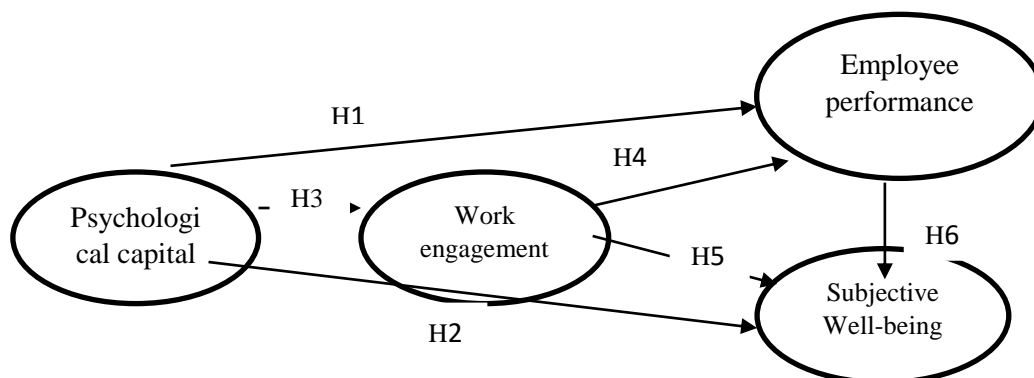


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

III. Research Method

3.1 Measurement

This study used a questionnaire to collect primary data directly from the respondents. The psychological capital variable was measured using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ), which consists of 24 items from four aspects: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007). Meanwhile, the work engagement variable was measured using a questionnaire based on the short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which consists of 9 items from three aspects: enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption (W. Schaufeli et al., 2002). The subjective well-being variable was measured using a scale adapted from the Satisfaction With Life Scale from Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (2020) and the Positive and Negative Affect

Schedule (PANAS) from Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988). The subjective well-being scale consists of 25 items (5 cognitive items and 20 affective items). Finally, the employee performance variable is measured using a scale developed by Pradhan and Jena (2017), which consists of 23 items from three aspects: task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance. Each of the above items will be assessed on a Likert scale.

3.2 Population, Sample, Location, and Time Period

The population of this study consists of 407 employees of a steel billet and iron rod factory in Jakarta. The quantitative method is used in this study. According to Firdaus, Susanti, & Syah, (2019), the quantitative method aims to discuss the research model, the significant relationship between variables and factors, and hypotheses. In addition, probability sampling techniques are generally applied in the quantitative approach. This study was conducted in May 2022. This study focuses on the relationship between psychological capital, work engagement, subjective well-being, and employee performance.

3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique using LISREL 8.80, which was carried out in 5 stages: (1) Measurement model test which included a goodness-of-fit test (consisting of 8 indicators, namely RMSEA, IFI, df, NFI, NNFI, CFI, GFI, AGFI), validity test, and reliability tests; (2) FL validity test > 0.50 ; (3) Reliability test (if the Construct Reliability value is 0.70 and Average Variance Extract is 0.50); (4) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) test to examine all processed latent variables; and (5) Structural model test or hypotheses testing (if the t-value is ≥ 1.96 , then the hypothesis is accepted, otherwise it is not accepted).

The value of the standard coefficient on the structural model test shows the strength of the influence between the two latent variables. The SEM technique is considered more rigorous than the regular stepwise regression technique because all mediation pathways are measured simultaneously step by step (Hair Jr., Black, Babin, and Anderson, 2010).

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1 Validity test

In this phase, the validity and reliability of the variables are measured by inputting data and forming a model using the syntax. Afterward, the data was run to obtain the model as shown in Figure 2.

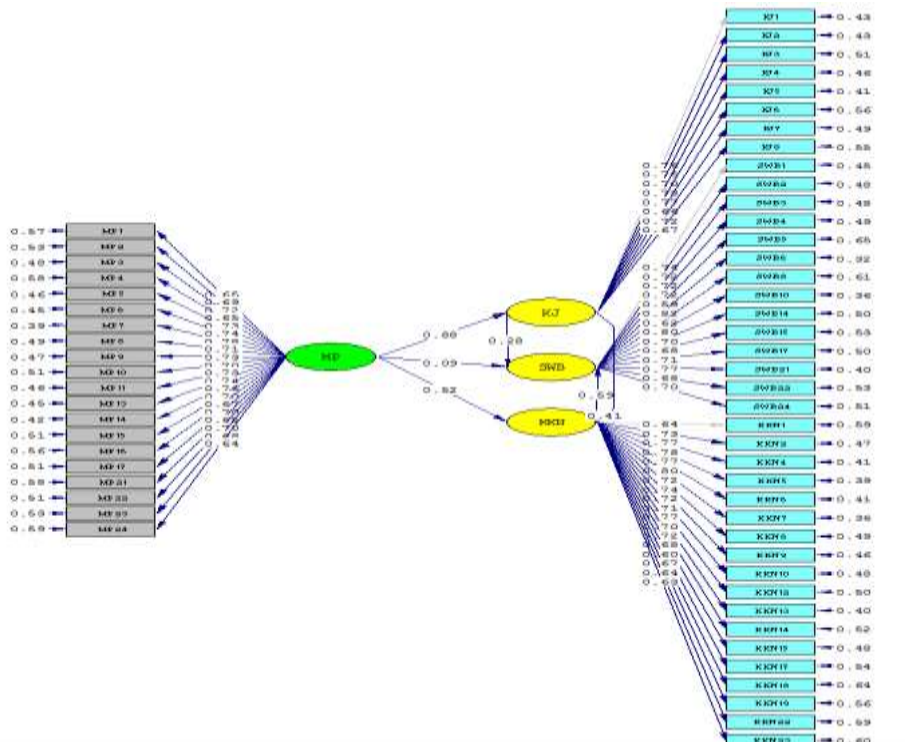


Figure 2. Basic research model with factor loading values

In this test, each variable studied is examined by looking at its correlation coefficients. The factor loading (FL) value obtained must be greater than 0.50, which means that factor analysis can be used and processed further. The factor loading values of the indicators for each construct are already above 0.50. Previously, items below 0.50 were deleted due to their low contribution. There were 3 items of psychological capital, 1 item of work engagement, 5 items of employee performance, and 9 items of SWB.

4.2 Reliability Test

The data was further tested to measure the level of instrument consistency, which means that the items in each construction between the item designers and the respondents who filled the questionnaire have the same understanding, namely the Construct Reliability (CR) value is expected to be equal to or greater than 0.70. In addition, the Average Variance Extract (AVE) used to measure the amount of variance of each item construct relative to the amount caused by measurement error is expected to be greater than 0.50. The results of the testing of CR and AVE values for the research model can be seen in table 1:

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Average Variance Extract

Variable	Construct Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extract (AVE)	Description
Psychological Capital	0.950	0.500	Reliable
Work Engagement	0.896	0.519	Reliable
SWB	0.936	0.513	Reliable
Employee performance	0.948	0.507	Reliable

4.3 Statistical Descriptive Test

The research respondents were 407 employees from steel billet and iron rods manufacturing companies in Jakarta. In terms of gender, there were more men (95.8%) than women (14.2%). The age of the respondents ranged from 19 years to 58 years. Total work experience varies from under five years to more than sixteen years. The latest education of the majority of employees in the steel billet and iron rod manufacturing companies is Senior High School/Vocational High School. Yet, there were also employees who graduated from postgraduate and diploma 3 education. Furthermore, the salary of employees of steel billet and iron rod manufacturing companies ranges from Rp 4,000,000 to above Rp10,000,000.

4.4 Goodness-of-Fit Test of the Model

The data of the goodness-of-fit test denoted that the parameters are in accordance with the cut-off value which will be explained in table 2, which was followed by the hypotheses testing.

Table 2. The goodness of fit index

Index	Result	Cut Off Value	Criteria
CFI	0.99	≥ 0.9	Fit
NNFI	0.99	≥ 0.9	Fit
NFI	0.98	≥ 0.9	Fit
IFI	0.99	≥ 0.9	Fit
df	1704	> 0	Fit
RMSEA	0.067	≤ 0.08	Fit
GFI	0.72	≥ 0.9	Not Fit
AGFI	0.70	≥ 0.9	Not Fit

4.5 Hypothesis testing

The hypotheses were tested by observing the t-value. If t-value \geq t. table 1.96 then H_0 is rejected (the hypothesis is accepted).

Table 3. t-value test results

Variable	T-Value	Result
Psychological Capital → Employee Performance	6.53	H1 is accepted
Psychological Capital → SWB	1.34	H2 is rejected
Psychological Capital → Work Engagement	15.66	H3 is accepted
Work Engagement → Employee Performance	5.23	H4 is accepted
Work Engagement → SWB	3.94	H5 is accepted
Employee Performance → SWB	7.74	H6 is accepted

The results of this study indicated that of the six hypotheses proposed, five of the data obtained supported the hypotheses and one data did not support the hypothesis. The t-value of the effect of psychological capital on employee performance is 6.35, so it is concluded that psychological capital has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The t-value of the effect of psychological capital on SWB is 1.34, which means that psychological capital has no effect on SWB. The t-value of the effect of psychological capital on work engagement is 15.66, which means that psychological capital has a positive and significant effect on work engagement. The t-value of the effect of work engagement on employee performance is 5.23, which means that work

engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The t-value of the effect of work engagement on SWB is 3.94, which means that work engagement has a positive and significant effect on SWB. Finally, the t-value of the effect of employee performance on SWB is 7.74, which means that employee performance has a positive and significant effect on SWB.

4.6 Mediation Test

Table 4 denoted the direct and indirect effects of the psychological capital variable on SWB and employee performance through the mediating variable of work engagement.

Table 4. Result of Direct & Indirect Effects

Relationship Pattern				Direct effects	Indirect effects	Total Effects	
Psychological Capital	→	Work Engagement	→	Employee Performance	0.52	0.36	0.88
Psychological Capital	→	Work Engagement	→	SWB	0.09	0.77	0.86

The results of the mediation test showed that the first test on the effect of the psychological capital variable on the employee performance variable through the mediation of the work engagement variable was rejected, as the value of indirect effect (0.36) < direct effect (0.52). The second test on the effect of the psychological capital variable on the SWB variable through the mediation of the work engagement variable was accepted, as the indirect effect value (0.77) > direct effect (0.09).

4.7 Discussion

The results of the hypothesis testing indicated that psychological capital has a positive and significant effect on performance and engagement, but it has no effect on SWB. In this case, the higher the employees' psychological capital, the higher the employees' performance because the psychological capital can encourage the employees to succeed and achieve their goals. The results of this study provided empirical evidence for the argument of Rabenu et al., (2016), who stated that psychological capital, when leveraged as part of an effort to succeed and achieve goals, will produce better performance. In addition, Chen (2015) stated that psychological capital is a valuable positive psychological potential resource that can lead to increased employee engagement. The discussion above showed the fact that psychological capital consists of efforts to succeed (self-efficacy), having the will and ability to come up with solutions to problems (hope), responding consistently and positively to difficulties and obstacles (resilience), and possessing positive references and expectations toward results (optimism). These facts are important in shaping personal resources that influence patterns of cognition and behavior to increase work engagement. On the other hand, employees who have psychological capital will have a positive point of view and the ability to solve problems, and be better prepared when dealing with challenging situations. In such case, employees tend to be more engaged in their work (Kang & Busser, 2018).

As hypothesized, psychological capital has no effect on SWB. The results of this study are different from previous findings, which state that strong psychological capital helps build positive attributions in connection with challenging work goals, resulting in an increase in positive effects and a decrease in negative effects. (Singhal, 2018). The results of this study have been discussed via interviews with stakeholders in the HR department.

Psychological capital does not affect SWB because the dimensions of psychological capital consist of self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism that will only be able to help employees bounce back and have ways of dealing with stress, but these dimensions have nothing to do with SWB. Today, employees are required to produce efficient products needed by the market at low prices. For this reason, in these difficult times, employees are only able to survive to get back up and deal with stress, but they have not been able to increase their SWB.

This study also showed that work engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and SWB. Research conducted by Cho (2021) also showed a clear relationship between work engagement and the task performance of school teachers in Singapore. Awan et al. (2020) found that higher levels of work engagement can increase the contextual performance and task performance of employees. Work engagement can increase employees' efforts to complete their direct tasks, while contextual performance in work engagement can provide intrinsic motivation for conducting tasks other than the employees' main task. Hence, engaged employees can deliver better performance. The results also showed a clear relationship between work engagement and SWB. This finding is supported by previous research conducted by Cho (2021), which explained that engaged employees are characterized as recipients of various psychological benefits that ultimately contribute to their well-being. This means that effective engagement with the employees' role in the workplace provides confidence which results in a pleasant mood. Hu et al. (2016) stated that a high level of work engagement can increase work efficiency, resulting in a positive emotional state and the ability to achieve goals (Rahman & Susanti, 2021). Thus, with a high level of work engagement, employees will be able to resist boredom and negative emotions, leading to a positive and serious attitude towards work which in turn enables the employees to experience SWB.

Furthermore, the results of the study denoted that employee performance has a positive and significant effect on SWB. It can be concluded that when employees are able to produce results that can satisfy work demands, they will feel happy. Such feeling will directly result in an increase in SWB for employees of steel billet and iron rod manufacturing companies. A sense of pleasure in achieving good performance at work can affect the improvement of mental health (Cho, 2021). Employees who experience SWB in their lives can cultivate the ability to overcome obstacles and problems in the workplace effectively (Singhal, 2018).

With regard to the effect of the psychological capital variable on employee performance related to work engagement, this study also found that work engagement did not mediate the effect of psychological capital on employee performance. In other words, psychological capital is more effective in directly influencing employee performance than work engagement. Darvishmotevali & Ali (2020) explained that psychological capital can increase employees' stress tolerance, positive perceptions of events, and ability to overcome problems around them. This statement further supports the idea that psychological capital as individual motivation and business propensity can thus result in improved performance (Rabenu et al., 2016)

On the other hand, the mediation relationship is fully supported, namely by the effect of the psychological capital variable on SWB related to work engagement. The results denoted that the higher the psychological capital, the lower the level of SWB. However, it can be said that psychological capital can indirectly affect SWB through work engagement. Employees who have a pool of resources such as high psychological capital will spend more effort on tasks and devote themselves to work (Lupsa & Virga, 2020), resulting in an increase in positive effects and a decrease in negative effects (Singhal, 2018).

V. Conclusion

The authors have shown that psychological capital development can lead to impactful human resource development, especially when the steel billet and iron bar manufacturing industry is experiencing an economic crisis. Human resource development can facilitate leaders, company management, and employees to become more resistant to adversity, more effective in solving problems, more optimistic for the future, and full of hope to achieve company goals. This study provides evidence of the relationship between psychological capital, work engagement, performance, and SWB. Strong psychological capital has a positive and significant effect on work engagement and employee performance, but it does not affect SWB. Furthermore, strong work engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and SWB. On top of that, employee performance has a positive and significant impact on SWB. The most important findings of this study are the results of two tests of mediation relationships. First, work engagement has an indirect effect on the relationship between psychological capital and SWB. Second, work engagement does not have an effect on the relationship between psychological capital and employee performance.

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