

# A Survey of the Relationship between the Psychological Capital Components and Staff' Productivity: A Case of the Genaveh County Offices of Education

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this paper was to investigate the relationship between the psychological capital components and employees productivity of the Genaveh County offices of education. This is an applied and descriptive-survey research. The research population is the 1324 staff of the offices of education of Genaveh County in 2015. The sample includes 297 people selected using Morgan's table and the stratified random sampling method. The data were collected using Luthans' psychological capital questionnaire (2007) and Hersey & Goldsmith human resources productivity questionnaire (1984). To analyze the data, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression were used simultaneously. All this was done using SPSS Software Version 21. Results revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the psychological capital components and staff productivity at the level of ( $P < 0.001$ ). Results of the regression analysis also indicated that psychological capital components have a significant effect on productivity ( $F_{292, 4} = 14.1, P < 0.001$ ). Also, the  $R^2$  value showed that psychological capital can explain 15% of the variance in productivity.

**Keywords:** psychological capital, staff productivity, Offices of Education

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, education systems are large and complex organizations in most countries due to the sweeping social changes. They are key players in the social, cultural, and economic growth of every society and have evolved from simple elementary organizations to become increasingly sophisticated. The effectiveness of every education system is in realizing the potentials of the talented individuals and transforming them into healthy, cultivated, and refined people and at the same time providing the society with the required human resources in cultural, economic, and social spheres. Today, due to extensive scientific, technological, and industrial advancements, attention has been drawn all over the world to educational organizations, to the extent that the vastness of the range of responsibilities assumed by it is considered as a measure of development. Therefore, in every country, education is regarded as the foundation upon which development takes (Alagheband, 2002).

Human resources are essential to any organization, satisfying its strategic demands, raising its other organizational capitals. The reason why such significance is attached to human resources is that only human beings can enhance themselves quantitatively and qualitatively, propose new projects, solve problems through their creativity, increase their workforce, find ways to reduce costs, and more importantly, adapt themselves to their environment and change their environment to suit their purposes. Furthermore, human beings are at the same time the means and the ends of productivity; and this adds to the significance of human resources. Therefore, higher quality human resources can guarantee the stability and survival of any organization and provide it with a mechanism to gain competitive advantage over its rivals (A team of Management Scholars, 1996).

Experts and scholars view human resources productivity as dependent upon different variables, yet they all agree that it is not dependent solely upon one specific variable but a combination of various variables. Studies show that primarily productivity is subject to ability and motivation. In other words, the staff should be interested in the job they do and have the required skills for that job (Rezaeian, 2006).

According to Japan Productivity Center effective variables on productivity include training and empowering the staff, participatory management, organizational justice, operation speed, operation quality, unit cost, individual commitment, effective communication, job satisfaction. Some thinkers of management consider education, training, experience, management quality, capital, technology, facilities, and social environment as factors affecting productivity (Gholipour & Hamidian, 2009).

Hersey & Goldsmith extend these variables to include ability to do the job, clarity and job acceptance, organizational support, motivation for doing the job, daily performance evaluation and feedback, validation of the decisions made by managers, and environmental adaptation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988; Sadeghi et al., 2013).

In the past, the psychologists' and organizational behavior researchers' approach to improving human resources productivity was focusing on the weak points of the staff and their behavior pathology in order to present appropriate solutions for eliminating or minimizing them; consequently, positive aspects and abilities were ignored. With the advent of Positive Psychology movement in the 90s and the emphasis on the positive aspects of the behavior attention was shifted. This approach was first introduced by Luthans, et al. (2007), into the field of organization and management and was called Positive Organizational Behavior (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988).

Positive Organizational Behavior was originally defined as "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace" This new organizational approach assumes that through avoiding preoccupation with weaknesses and malfunctions, leaders and colleagues can improve the staff and organization's performance by concentrating on strengths and positive qualities. In expanding the Positive Organizational Behavior, Luthans et al. (2007), realized that 4 positive psychological facets (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency) in combination form a new core factor called "psychological capital" which is highly instrumental in improving the performance of the individual and the organization.

Psychological capital is the developmental state of the positive organizational behavior. It enables the individuals to overcome stressful situations and face challenges capably, have a clear opinion of them and be less affected by daily events through confidence in their own abilities for achieving success, perseverance toward goals, making positive attributions about themselves and the power to endure hardships (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007).

Psychological capital improves other organizational capitals includes whatever you know, whoever you know, who you are and who you will be, beyond human and social capitals. Contrary to tangible organizational assets, human capital can be developed and managed with minimal costs, and it can be considered as a potential factor for improving human resources productivity and gaining competitive advantage with considerable results for the organization (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Since education is the cornerstone of development of a country and human resources are its essential components, improving the human resources productivity in education sector is of utmost significance. According to above, the main purpose of this research; was to investigate the relationship between the psychological capital components and employees productivity of the Genaveh County offices of education.

## 2. Research Methodology

This research is the descriptive-survey type. The population consists of all the staff of the Genaveh County offices of education in the educational year 2014-2015, amounting to 1324 people (667 male, 657 female). To determine the sample size, Krejcie and Morgan Table was used, and using stratified random method, 297 (151 male, 146 female) staff of the offices of education were selected. Luthans et al. Psychological Capital Questionnaire (2007), was employed to assess psychological capital. This questionnaire contains 24 questions on the 4 subscales of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency; and each subscale includes 6 items and examinees responded to each item on Likert's Scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). To measure the value of the psychological capital, the value of each of the 4 subscales was calculated separately, and the sum total of them was considered as the value of the psychological capital. The questions 13, 20 and 23 were inversely scored, and the scores assigned to the rest of the questions were 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) respectively. In studies by Babaeian et al. (2012), Hoveida et al. (Luthans & Avolio, 2007), Hozouri et al., (2012), reliability of this questionnaire was reported to be 0.95, 0.77, 0.89 respectively, using Cronbach's alpha. In the present study, it is 0.77, using Cronbach's alpha. Validity of the questionnaire was also calculated by Bahadori K. et al. (2013) to be 24.6 using Pearson's chi-squared test, and 0.97 and 0.08, respectively, using CF and RMSEA statistics. The construct validity of the psychological capital questionnaires was calculated by Mohebbi N. et al. (2011) using confirmatory variables analysis. Results showed that all the items related to the questionnaire subscales had significant effects on the related variables ( $P < 0.001$ ) and none of its components were excluded.

Hersey & Goldsmith human resources productivity questionnaire (1984) was used to measure the productivity. This questionnaire contains 27 questions on 7 subscales of motivation, ability, comprehension, organizational support, environmental adaptation, feedback and validation. The scoring method was based on Likert's five-point scale, scoring questions from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) respectively. Reliability of this questionnaire in studies conducted by Moshabaki (Mohebbi et al., 2014) and Haghghatjoo (Hayati, 2012) was reported to be 0.83 and 0.89 respectively, using Cronbach's alpha. In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated to be 0.83, using Cronbach's alpha. The criterion validity of the questionnaire was obtained by Golabian to be 0.78, using Robin's productivity scale (Moshabaki et al., 2010). Haghghatjoo reported the validity of this questionnaire to be 283.5, using Pearson's test.

To conduct this study, the required tools were prepared and the sampling process was performed. Then the questionnaires were distributed among the samples and instructions were given on how to fill them in. Eventually the data were collected and analyzed using SPSS Software Version 21. To analyze the data, descriptive measures of central tendency and dispersion were used, and for analyzing the data related to the research hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression were used simultaneously.

### 3. Research Findings

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Variable	Level	Frequency	Frequency Percentage
Working experience	1-5 years	34	11.4
	6-10 years	62	20.9
	11-15 years	38	12.8
	15-above	163	54.9
	20-29 years	38	12.8
Age	30-39 years	116	39.1
	40-49 years	122	41.1
	50-above	21	7.1
Gender	Male	151	50.85
	Female	146	49.15
Education	Elementary School	108	36.4
	Middle School	68	22.9
	High School	111	37.4
Qualification	Administrative	10	3.4
	Associate Degree	64	21.5
	Bachelor of Arts	207	69.7
	Master of Arts/Science	26	8.8

As it can be seen in Table 1, male employees comprise 50.85% of the sample and females 49.15%, of whom 36.4% are employed in elementary schools, 22.9% in middle schools, 37.4 % in high schools, and 3.4% in administrative offices. The table also shows that, concerning educational level, employees with bachelor's degree with 69.7%, concerning years of service, employees with 15 or more years of service with 54.9%, and concerning age, employees between 40-49 years of age with 41.1% have the highest frequency.

Table 2. Mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix of the research variables

Model	Variables	Mean	SD	Self-efficacy	Hope	Resiliency	Optimism
1	Psychological Capital	119.94	9.70				
2	Self-efficacy	31.86	3.78	1			
3	Hope	31.82	3.06	0.44**	1		
4	Resiliency	29.58	3.19	0.28**	0.54**	1	
5	Optimism	26.68	3.84	0.14**	0.29**	0.50**	1
6	Productivity	88.77	14.19	0.27**	0.30**	0.35**	0.21**

\*P<0.016

\*\* P<0.001

Table 2 presents measures of central tendency and variation of the variables studied and correlation coefficient between the variables. Psychological capital has the mean of 119.94 and standard deviation of 9.7. Productivity has the mean of 88.77 and standard deviation of 14.19. On the other hand, there is a significant and positive relationship ( $P < 0.001$ ) between the psychological capital and its components and the productivity variable.

Table 3. Summary of the multiple regression analysis

Model	Statistic Source of change	Sum of squares	df	Mean of Squares	F	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	SD	Sig
Inter	Regression	959.934	4	2398.733	14.01	0.401	0.161	0.150	13.08	0.001
	Remainder	49978/952	292	171.161						
	Total	9573.886	296							

Simultaneous multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the components of the psychological capital on employees' productivity. Psychological capital and its components entered the equation as predictor variables and productivity as the criterion variable. Table 3 shows that components of psychological capital have significant effects ( $F_{(292, 4)} = 14.01, P < 0.001$ ) on productivity and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value indicates that predictor variables are able to justify 15% of the variance in employees' productivity.

Table 4. Standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients for predicting criterion variable

Statistic Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t-value	Significance	Partial Correlation Coefficient
	B	SD	$\beta$			
Constance	19.161	9.655		1.984	0.048	
Self-efficacy	0.641	0.251	0.153	2.552	0.011	0.148
Hope	0.433	0.317	0.093	1.367	0.173	0.080
Resiliency	1.053	0.313	0.237	3.363	0.001	0.193
Optimism	0.160	0.229	0.043	0.702	0.483	0.041

As coefficients in Table 4 shows, self-efficacy with  $\beta$  coefficient of 0.153 and resiliency with 0.273 were significant predictors of productivity, while hope with  $\beta$  coefficient of 0.093 and optimism with 0.43 were not.  $\beta$  coefficients indicate that resiliency has the most effect. Partial correlation coefficients also show that resiliency explains the greatest proportion of variance in productivity.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this research was to investigate the relationship between the psychological capital and its components and productivity of the employees of education sector in Genaveh County. Results revealed that there is positive and significant relationship between the psychological capital components and employees' productivity, i.e. improving the psychological capital enhances employees' productivity. Results of the regression analysis also indicated that psychological capital and its components are able to predict 15% of the change in the employees' productivity.

Research findings also demonstrate that there is a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and productivity ( $P < 0.001$ ). The coefficient of determination shows that approximately 7.3% of the variance in productivity could be explained by self-efficacy. This agrees with results obtained by Frouhar et al. (2010) (Forouhar et al., 2010) and Adler et al. (2002). It can be inferred that people with high self-efficacy are creative, eager to learn and show enterprise, with spirit of cooperation. All these characteristics contribute to the employee's commitment to his/her job and his/her job satisfaction, thus leading to inner peace and tranquility which improve performance. Besides, people with high self-efficacy and self-confidence tend to believe that they can be successful in tasks assigned to them. They can tackle stressful situations and problems better and try to

act more efficiently.

There is a positive and significant relationship between the psychological capital component hope and productivity ( $P < 0.001$ ). The coefficient of determination shows that 9% of the variance in productivity can be explained by the component hope. These findings are in agreement with those reported by Hashemi, N. et al. (1390), Snyder (2002), and Avi et al. (2008). Indeed, hope pushes people to work hard and persevere and thus boosts the satisfaction people would have of their jobs and their commitment to their jobs. People with high levels of hope are more motivated than their counterparts, and can adapt to their work environment better and make long-term plans.

There is a positive and significant relationship ( $P < 0.001$ ) between the psychological capital component resiliency and productivity. The coefficient of determination indicates that 12% of the variance in productivity can be explained by the component resiliency. This agrees with the findings of Mohebbi N. (2014), and Ben and Eaton (2001). Effectively, resiliency functions as a protective factor when employees face difficulties or damaging experiences at work or are unprepared against risky tasks. High resiliency enables employees to maintain their relationship with their colleagues, keep themselves motivated, and preserve their personal assets and their skills, despite all difficulties and obstacles; and thus be able to adapt themselves to the environment outside and inside the organization and hence improve their productivity.

There is a positive and significant relationship ( $P < 0.001$ ) between the psychological capital component optimism and productivity. The coefficient of determination indicates that 4.4% of the variance in productivity can be explained by the component optimism. This result is in agreement with findings of Rahimi et al. (2012), Hassanzadeh (2009), Jensen and Luthans (2006) and Chemers (2008). It could be argued that since optimism promotes good will and trust among employees, it positively affects organizational justice perception, receiving help from colleagues, and feedback acceptance. Furthermore, optimism generates a wide range of positive results such as mental and physical health, happiness, and flexibility in encountering problems. Therefore, it plays a significant role in improving the productivity.

Education system is one of the most basic pillars of every society, guaranteeing its future; and therefore employees of the education systems, especially teachers are one of the most valuable human resources. Lack of good teachers would undoubtedly lead to tremendous waste of resources.

Based on the results of this study, one of the ways of improving the productivity (the ratio of outputs to inputs) of the employees of the education sector is to pay attention to its psychological capitals. The four components of the psychological capital, self-efficacy, hope, resiliency and optimism, which entered the equation, explained only 15% of the variance in the employee's productivity; a very low percentage. Since employee's psychological capitals are the most available and easily managed resources of an institution, it is expected that the management of the education sector improve the productivity and the status of teachers in society through financial and non-financial incentive schemes.

Due to the facts that the scope of this research was limited geographically, the examinees were not in a good mental condition, the only tools available were questionnaires, and the research method was correlational, a cause and effect relationship cannot be established between the research variables and extend the results to include other regions.

They reason why psychological capital is neglected in the education system here is the management's lack of knowledge and skills for exploiting them. Therefore, in order to be able to utilize this capital efficiently, theoretical and practical training courses should be planned for managers of all levels.

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