

BOREOUT, EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING, AND THE POTENTIAL MODERATION BY PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

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ABSTRACT

Employee well-being is an important determining factor that contributes to employee resilience (Tonkin, Malinen, Näswall, & Kuntz, 2018) and productivity (Baptiste, 2008), which ultimately plays a vital role in an organization's success (Tonkin et al., 2018). Established positive organizational psychological behaviors and characteristics, such as psychological capital (PsyCap), have been shown to increase employee well-being (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010). However, as the workplace continues to change, new threats to employee well-being are constantly emerging (Pradhan & Hati, 2022). A new threat to employee well-being known as "boreout" has not yet been extensively studied, and the potential for boreout to affect employee well-being while employees are experiencing differing levels of PsyCap warrants further study. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among boreout, PsyCap, and employee well-being and to assess the potential role of PsyCap as a moderator of the relationship between boreout and employee well-being. Overall, the results of this study indicated that PsyCap was positively associated with employee well-being and negatively associated with boreout. In addition, boreout was inversely associated with employee well-being. The relationship between boreout and employee well-being was not moderated by PsyCap. The implications of these findings and suggestions for future research are discussed.

BOREOUT, EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING, AND THE POTENTIAL MODERATION BY
PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The average organization will face numerous challenges relating to their employed workforce. These challenges may include high absenteeism, high turnover, burnout, low performance, low engagement, low productivity, and incivility (Baptiste, 2008). It can be argued that as the duration and the accumulation of challenges an organization encounters with its workforce increases, the more harm is incurred in terms of lost profitability and efficiency (Baptiste, 2008). Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that organizations cannot afford to allow these challenges to continue not only from a profit standpoint, but from an employee well-being standpoint as well. In order to combat these negative challenges, Luthans and Avolio (2009) have repeatedly suggested the cultivation of positive organizational behaviors (POBs) as a means of improving employee well-being, and in turn the profitability and efficiency of organizations.

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is well established and has been shown to be effective in improving employee well-being (Gull, Azhar, & Gull, 2022). However, research on how developing PsyCap can potentially combat new challenges to employee well-being (e.g., boreout) is relatively limited. Although related to the concept of burnout, in contrast, boreout is a new phenomenon among employees who are experiencing negative mental states caused by lack of stimulation and other resource deficits while at work (Stock, 2015). Although the positive relationship between PsyCap and employee well-being has been empirically supported (Gull et al., 2022), the potential impact of employee boreout on employee well-being has been largely ignored. The present study seeks to address this gap in the literature by examining the potential impact of boreout on the well-being of employees who experiencing differing levels of PsyCap.

Positive Organizational Behavior

In order to develop a competitive advantage with respect to human capital, many organizations have turned to the field of positive psychology over the past few decades (Newman, Ucbasaran, Zhu, & Hirst, 2014). As organizations continue to express interest in the use of positive psychology in the workplace, it is important that organizations pursue POB constructs rather than the popular self-help and development literature that has flooded the positive psychology market (Luthans & Avolio, 2009). In an attempt to differentiate POB from the popularized positively oriented organizational behaviors (OBs; Luthans & Avolio, 2009), POB has been purposefully 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” (Luthans, 2002b, p. 59). As indicated by this definition of POB, a set of specific criteria dictates which positive constructs classify as POB. The requisite criteria needed to be classified as a POB include the following: (1) being founded on theory and ultimately evidence-based research practices; (2) being heavily positively oriented, so that it is consistent with positive psychology research; (3) containing valid and reliable measurements; and (4) being related to measurable work-related attitudes, behaviors, and performance (Luthans, 2002a, b). PsyCap is considered to fall under the POB umbrella, there is far more to PsyCap than its POB classification.

Conservation of Resources Theory

Hobfoll’s conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1988; 1989) claims that individuals will invest excessive effort into obtaining, retaining, sheltering, and protecting those resources that hold value to them. These resources may take the form of objects, conditions, personal characteristics, and energy (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018) and they

influence the development of behaviors associated with PsyCap, employee well-being, and burnout. The role of these resources and their conservation has been instrumental in deciphering employee behavior in organizations (Hobfoll et al., 2018). To better understand the relationship between employee behavior and COR theory, the four main principles and three corollaries of COR theory will be discussed in greater detail.

Principles of Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of resources (COR) theory outlines four main principles that explain the role that this phenomenon plays in relation to employee behavior (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The first principle of COR theory suggests that individuals perceive resource loss as drastically more consequential than resource gain. This perceived significance of resource loss over gain comes from the fact that resource loss has a greater effect on individuals' abilities and behaviors (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The second principle of COR theory claims that the investment of resources is necessary to prevent resource loss, recover from prior resource loss, and to attain new resources. This principle suggests that behaviors that correspond to the development of POB may reduce the likelihood of developing negative attitudes or behaviors among employees (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The third principle of COR theory states that when the threat of resource loss occurs, the importance of gaining new resources increases. This relies heavily on the concept that the more resources individuals gain, the less vulnerable they are to the loss of resources. For example, when the likelihood of a negative event occurring is enhanced, employees are more likely to participate in POB to help reduce the threat of resource loss from this event (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The final principle of COR theory dictates that when resource loss has occurred and exhausted the available resources, individuals adopt a defensive state to preserve their remaining resources. This principle best explains the negative behaviors (e.g.,

decreased performance and attendance) that employees may display when stressors are present in the workplace (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Corollaries of Conservation of Resources Theory

Similar to the principles of COR theory above the following three corollaries aid in explaining employee behaviors as they relate to resources within the organization (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The first corollary provides insight on the levels of vulnerability and resilience of employees based on whether ample resources are available or whether employees experience a loss of resources. For example, employees' vulnerability with respect to resource loss directly corresponds to the number of resources the employee currently holds, such that the more resources employees currently held, the less vulnerable they are to resource loss (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The second corollary suggests that upon the initial loss of resources, the loss of additional resources is likely to transpire due to the individual's attempts to offset the initial loss. This results in a continuous downward spiral for employees as they lose more and more resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The final corollary states that the recovery or gains of resources is a much slower process compared to the loss of resources. This is likely due to the time and development necessary for resource attainment (Hobfoll et al., 2018). PsyCap development is a key example of the third corollary, especially as PsyCap consists of four different facets (HERO) that must be developed.

Psychological Capital

As previously indicated by its POB classification, PsyCap is founded on theory and research; is measurable, state-like, malleable; and has been shown to substantially impact employee performance (Luthans & Avolio, 2009), job attitudes (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011) and employee psychological well-being (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010).

While it can be argued that PsyCap is more trait-like than it is state-like, it has been well established in literature that PsyCap is regarded as state-like to a greater degree due to the developmental capabilities of working adults (Youseff-Morgan & Luthans, 2015). PsyCap emphasizes the importance of ensuring that employees develop an understanding of ‘who they are’ and ultimately ‘who they are becoming’ (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans & Youssef, 2004), and PsyCap’s definition further reflects this importance. Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, and Avolio (2007a) define PsyCap as “an individual’s positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success” (p. 340). This definition further reflects that PsyCap is a higher-order construct as shown by both the shared similarities and distinctive characteristics among the four positive personal resources (i.e., hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism), upon interaction with each other (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). As each of the four positive personal resources synergistically interact under PsyCap (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017), they fundamentally serve as what is known as one of Hobfoll’s (2002) resource caravans.

HERO

As noted, PsyCap is comprised of four positive personal resources: hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (HERO). The PsyCap facet of hope is defined as “a positive motivation state based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency... and (b) pathways...” (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991, p. 287). This direct use of the definition of hope provides an

important distinction from other definitions, especially as Snyder and colleagues' definition of hope contains two critical attributes, agency and pathways. Agency and its relation to hope often refers to the individual's resolve to actively pursue goals. Meanwhile, pathways are the individual's ability to create differing methods to reach goals after the initial efforts begin to hinder goal completion (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

The facet of efficacy is similar to the agency used to pursue goals as generated by hope, however; efficacy is defined as "the individual'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 with a given context" (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998, p. 66). Efficacy plays a vital role in generating the desired outcomes from developing employee PsyCap, as Bandura's (1997) study supported the link between levels of efficacy and performance.

PsyCap further draws directly from developmental psychology by defining resilience as "the capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure or even positive events, progress and increased responsibility" (Luthans 2002b, p. 702). Employees who display resilience will often exhibit positive adaptation of behaviors to engage in the processes of overcoming obstacles and risk while utilizing personal, social, and/or psychological resources.

Lastly, PsyCap defines optimism as the utilization of a positive explanatory style when accounting for events. When using a positive explanatory style, positive events are viewed as being caused by personal, indefinite, and or pervasive causes, and negative events are attributed to external, short-lived, and/or situational factors. In contrast, employees who utilize a pessimistic explanatory style consider negative events to be engendered by personal, indefinite, and/or pervasive factors, whereas positive events are explained in terms of external, short-lived,

and/or situational factors (Seligman 1998). Optimism may also be referred to in PsyCap as a general positive view that then generates universal positive expectancies (Carver, Scheier, Miller, & Fulford, 2009). Seligman's explanatory view suggests that optimism is more situation-specific, whereas Carver and colleagues' (2009) view on optimism refers to a more overarching positive outlook on life. POB, and therefore PsyCap, combines these perceptions to conceptualize optimism (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

The positive psychological resources associated with PsyCap share some notable similarities. The definitions provided for each facet of HERO reveal a common theme in which each facet places emphasis on the overall positive assessment of situations as directly influenced by individuals' motivated efforts and persistence (Luthans, Avolio, Avery, & Norman, 2007b). The similarities among control, intention, and goal pursuit further allow for all four positive resources to interact effectively and efficiently to facilitate active, purposeful efforts toward goal attainment (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

Employee Well-being

Along with the uptick in the use of positive psychology in the workplace comes increased attention regarding employee well-being within the organization. Definitions of employee well-being often consist of emotional/subjective (hedonic), psychological (eudaimonic), and workplace aspects. Hedonic employee well-being denotes feelings of happiness, life satisfaction, high exposure to positive affect, and low exposure to negative affect (Diener, 2000). Meanwhile, eudaimonic employee well-being incorporates personal growth, pursuits of a meaningful life (Mohad Salleh, Mansor, Zainal, & Yasin, 2020), and personal authenticity (Sonnentag, 2015). Lastly, workplace well-being has been argued to consist of employees' perceptions that contribute to job satisfaction and work-related affects (Pradhan & Hati, 2022). According to

Huhtala and Parzefall (2007), work-related affects are the emotions that an employee experiences while at work. An employee's level of well-being has a significant impact on the organization, as both positive and negative outcomes may occur as a direct reflection of employees' relative levels of well-being.

The organizational benefits of promoting and developing employee well-being have been documented across several decades of research. Employees who experience higher levels of well-being display increased work engagement, performance, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), and other proactive work-related behaviors. Furthermore, employees who experience higher levels of well-being are more likely to develop and pursue attainment of both job and personal resources (Sonnentag, 2015). In the context of the employee, job resources may be tangible (e.g., hardware), intangible (e.g., PsyCap, social relations), or organizational (e.g., feedback, quarterly reviews) in nature. These job resources are then utilized to achieve work-related tasks and goals, reduction of job demands, and overall development, growth, and learning of employees (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Similarly, personal resources are the individual factors (e.g., hope, resiliency, efficacy) that aid in the mastery of environment and goal completion (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009a). The attainment and development of both job and personal resources play a vital role in employee well-being as they directly impact levels of work engagement and performance (Sonnentag, 2015).

The development of higher levels of employee well-being is vital to an organization's success, especially when considering the negative consequences organizations may experience when levels of employee well-being are low. Employees with low levels of well-being are at higher risk of committing counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) which include abuse of other employees, deliberate sabotage, stealing, and work withdrawal (Sonnentag, 2015). Several

studies by Wright and Cropanzano (1997, 2000) indicated that employees with low levels of well-being are likely to experience decreased job performance. Moreover, lower levels of employee well-being were associated with decreased attendance and increased turnover (Wright, 2010).

Employee Well-being and PsyCap

PsyCap serves as a positive personal resource that employees can develop, and recent research suggests that PsyCap positively influences levels of employee well-being (Avey et al., 2010). The positive relationship between PsyCap and employee well-being does not come as a surprise, especially when considering the HERO construct of PsyCap. Each facet of HERO has its own positive effect on employee well-being, and these HERO facets synergistically interact under the state-like personal resource of PsyCap, thus bolstering the positive relationship between PsyCap and employee well-being (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015).

The first notable relationship between PsyCap and employee well-being is presented when considering how employee well-being is often cultivated by cognitive and affective perceptions of past, present, and future events. In relation to PsyCap and the facets of HERO, employees' positive perceptions of the past can be attributed to use of the positive explanatory style of optimism. Likewise, the facets of hope (and resulting agency), efficacy, and resilience contribute to employees' current motivation and perseverance. With respect to the future, the facet of optimism is attributed to positive expectations, and hope pathways facilitate the pursuit of future goals (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015).

PsyCap is further associated with employee well-being due to its classification as a personal resource. As mentioned earlier, high levels of employee well-being can inspire the development of job and other personal resources. This relationship between employee well-being

and both job and other personal resources, can also be reversed (Sonnentag, 2015). When relating PsyCap and employee well-being to resource theories, it can be argued that the presence of a personal resource, such as PsyCap, can aid in facilitating high levels of employee well-being. This signifies that PsyCap can be utilized as both a job and personal resource among employees. PsyCap's role as a personal resource becomes even more valuable as it may facilitate the accumulation of other types of resources when used alongside the positive perceptions of employees (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015). The continuous accumulation of resources generated by employee PsyCap and positivity can augment the overall balance and optimization of both positive and negative perceptions, therefore resulting in higher employee well-being (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015).

Lastly, through combinations of PsyCap's positive perceptions and accumulations of both job and personal resources, PsyCap can aid in mitigating negative affect in the workplace. PsyCap can reduce employee's unrealistic goals and expectations in the workplace through proper development of HERO (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015). The reduction of unrealistic goals and expectations can prevent negative well-being stressors such as workaholism, burnout (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015), and potentially boreout, from occurring. By reducing unrealistic goals and expectations, PsyCap allows employee well-being to be further developed by reducing the likelihood of negative stressors from occurring. As PsyCap's role as a resource appears to enhance its overall ability to positively develop employee well-being, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Employee well-being will be positively associated with PsyCap.

Boreout

Boreout made its first notable debut in Rothlin and Werder's (2008) book entitled "Boreout! Overcoming workplace demotivation." However, since this time very limited research on boreout has been conducted. According to Stock (2015) roughly 20% of service employees, specifically those who are specifically required to frequently interact with customers, regularly experience workplace demotivation. This uptick in service employee demotivation can be linked to employees experiencing boreout in their current job (Stock, 2015). Although the concept of workplace demotivation has been heavily studied in the past, the characteristics of boreout, and its relationship with burnout, suggest that boreout encompasses more than simple workplace demotivation. Instead, demotivation is one of the many negative consequences that can occur when employees are bored-out.

Boreout versus Burnout

Employees who are experiencing boreout are often considered to be in a negative psychological state characterized by job boredom, crisis of meaning at work, and crisis of growth (Stock, 2015). Often onset by the first characteristic of job boredom, boreout typically occurs among employees who are understimulated and dissatisfied. Job boredom can be caused by low cognitive arousal, often due to the overuse of routine tasks within the job (Abubakar, Rezapouraghdam, Behraves, & Megeirhi, 2022). Meanwhile, both crisis of meaning at work and crisis of growth suggest that employees have perceived there to be a loss of the necessary resources required to achieve meaning and growth (Stock, 2015). Losses of resources are further noted upon the occurrence of employees experiencing a crisis of meaning at work. Employees' perceptions of job tasks having little to no importance for the organization indicate a loss of resources. Similarly, employees experiencing a crisis of growth suggest that the resources

necessary for growth are lost, whether they be job-related or personal development in nature (Stock, 2015). When boreout is present, the organization is likely to incur negative outcomes stemming from employees' demotivation.

Although boreout is considered to incur limited strain on the organization, additional negative consequences can nevertheless occur (Abubakar et al., 2022). Employees who are demotivated due to boreout are likely to exhibit decreased engagement and increased cynicism, as well as CWBs (e.g., cyberloafing) and other deviant behaviors (e.g., absenteeism). In addition, boreout can negatively impact employees' intentions to remain at the organization, resulting in higher turnover rates (Abubakar et al., 2022). Additional research by Stock (2015) has demonstrated the strain of boreout on service employees' behaviors relating to innovation. Specifically, the attributes of crisis of meaning while at work and crisis of growth were shown to have the greatest impact on employees' abilities to perform innovative behaviors while interacting with customers (Stock, 2015). Lastly, boreout clearly serves as a negative affective state for employees at the workplace, as clearly established by the presence of both crisis of meaning and crisis of growth. As a result, boreout can also incur psychological strain and distress on employees (Abubakar et al., 2022). The implications that boreout has for employee well-being are significant and will be discussed in more detail.

Compared to boreout, burnout has received considerable empirical attention (Abubakar et al., 2022). . Employees who are experiencing burnout often reflect a state of physical and psychological fatigue characterized by emotional exhaustion, employee cynicism, and a personal sense of inefficacy due to the loss of the resources, energy, workplace enthusiasm, and confidence (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Burnout and the loss of resources can be attributed to employees experiencing high levels of stress for prolonged periods of time as a direct result of

being overstimulated in the workplace. Abubakar and colleagues (2022) further note that due to the familial relationship between burnout and boreout, the two concepts share several negative consequential similarities such as emotional exhaustion.

Boreout and PsyCap

The relationship between boreout and PsyCap has yet to be examined; however, as employees who express higher levels of PsyCap are less likely to experience burnout (Min, Kim, & Lee, 2015), it is reasonable to expect that PsyCap and boreout are negatively related as well. Stock (2015) states that the occurrence of boreout is a clear indication that resources of value (e.g., meaning and growth) were lost to employees. Not only does PsyCap's role as a resource (Gull et al., 2022) clearly aid in replacing the valued resources that were previously lost, but there are further implications for the role that HERO plays among employees. Research suggests that PsyCap and the facets of HERO can help reduce an employee's susceptibility to boreout (Abubakar et al., 2022). For example, employees who have higher levels of PsyCap, and therefore higher levels of hope and optimism, are likely to experience greater positivity, while being able to effectively navigate negative emotions that can arise and could potentially lead to boreout (Abubakar et al., 2022). Higher levels of efficacy can facilitate the perseverance of goal completion or personal growth, even in the face of adversity (e.g., the loss of valued resources). Similarly, higher levels of resilience indicate that employees are more flexible and capable of effectively responding to setbacks (e.g., underutilization) that would otherwise hinder employee engagement (Abubakar et al., 2022). PsyCap's ability to replenish resources and combat further resource loss suggests that PsyCap may be beneficial in lowering levels of employee boreout, as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Employee boreout will be negatively associated with PsyCap..

Boreout and Employee Well-being

The relationship between boreout and employee well-being warrants further attention; however, as the presence of burnout has been shown to predict psychological distress, and in turn decreased well-being (Anasori, Bayighomog, & Tanova, 2020), it is reasonable to expect that boreout negatively impacts all aspects of employee well-being. As previously mentioned, boreout is a negative affective state experienced at the workplace that is engendered by job boredom, crisis of meaning, and crisis of growth, all of which have the potential to incur psychological distress and other negative effects on well-being. Employees who suffer from boreout are likely to experience heightened levels of dissatisfaction while on the job, which could subsequently lead to unhappiness while at work, thus incurring further detriments to each employee's hedonic well-being (Abubakar et al., 2022). Eudaimonic well-being, which primarily relies on the employee experiencing both meaning and personal growth (Salleh et al., 2020), is also likely to decline in the presence of boreout. With the presence of boreout clearly indicating that employees are experiencing the loss of both meaning and growth, it is not surprising that psychological distress would occur. As psychological distress continues among employees, employees may begin to develop feelings of sadness and worthlessness, which again negatively influence employees' eudaimonic well-being (Abubakar et al., 2022). Lastly, it has been clearly established that the presence of boreout is indicative of negative work-related affective states, which directly impact employees' levels of work-related well-being. The presence of boreout negatively impacts hedonic, eudaimonic, and work-related well-being, which suggests that boreout decreases levels of employee well-being through loss of resources (Stock, 2015), whereas PsyCap has been suggested to improve employee well-being through the replenishment

and accrual of resources (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015). For the reasons mentioned above, the final two hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 3: *Employee well-being will be negatively associated with employee boreout.*

Hypothesis 4: *The relationship between boreout and employee well-being will be moderated by PsyCap such that higher levels of PsyCap will weaken the association between boreout and employee well-being.*

The Present Study

Due to boreout's recent debut into the organizational behavioral sciences, there is limited scholarly research surrounding it. The present study sought to address this gap in the literature by investigating the relationship between boreout and employee well-being, and the potential moderation of this relationship by PsyCap. In addition, the relationships among boreout, PsyCap, and employee well-being were examined in an effort to further clarify whether the presence of PsyCap in employees can reduce their susceptibility to boreout and promote their well-being.

CHAPTER II: METHODS

Sample

An initial sample of 389 full-time workers from the United States was collected via the crowdsourcing platform Connect Cloud. Respondents were required to be at least 18 years of age and work at least 35 hours per week to be eligible for participation in the study. To avoid restricting sample population size, but still collect relevant data, a variety of job occupations were examined including the following occupational categories: architecture and engineering, arts, designs, and entertainment, business and financial, community and social services, computer and mechanical services, construction and extraction services, education, training, and library, agricultural, food preparation and serving, healthcare practitioner and technical support, healthcare support, installation, maintenance and repair services, legal, life, physical, and social sciences, management, office and administrative services, personal care services, production, protective services, sales, and lastly transportation

Participants who failed to complete the survey in its entirety were excluded from the analyses, resulting in the removal of 39 participants. In addition, participants who failed to pass 6 out of 8 validity checks or displayed flatline patterns of responses were also removed, resulting in the removal of 60 participants. Eleven participants were removed for working less than 35 hours per week. One participant was also excluded due to the provision of illogical data (i.e., reporting having 99 years of experience while only being 39 years of age). Lastly, with the average completion time being 573 seconds (approximately 9.5 minutes), two additional participants were removed due to completing the survey in less than 120 seconds (2 minutes). As a result, the final sample consisted of 276 participants.

The final sample consisted of participants who ranged in age from 22 to 67 years old ($M = 39.11$, $SD = 10.07$). The vast majority of the participants in the study were female (63.4%) and White/Caucasian (72.8%). The frequencies and percentages of demographic variables relating to gender, race, marital status, and education are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1.
Sample Demographic Frequencies and Percentages

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Female	175	63.41
Male	99	35.87
Non-binary/Prefer not to say	2	0.72
Race		
White/Caucasian	201	72.83
Black/African American	44	15.94
Asian/Asian American	20	7.25
Native American or Alaskan Native	3	1.09
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0.36
Other	7	2.53
Marital Status		
Single	71	25.72
In a Relationship	34	12.31
Married	147	53.26
Divorced	22	7.97
Widowed	2	0.72
Education		
High School/equivalent	17	6.16
Some College	34	12.32
Associate degree	35	12.68
Bachelor's degree	125	45.29
Master's degree	50	18.12
Doctoral degree	5	1.81
Professional degree	10	3.62

In relation to work characteristics, participants worked an average of 42.24 hours per week ($SD = 6.73$) and reported working for their current employer for an average of 7.24 years ($SD = 5.71$). A wide variety of occupations were reported with the most frequently reported fields including computer and mechanical (14.9%), business and financial (11.6%), sales and

related (10.9%), office and administrative support (9.8%), management (6.5%), education/training and library services (5.8%), and health care support (5.1%), with each remaining occupational field accounting for less than 5% of the occupations reported by participants.

Procedure

The proposed study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and upon receiving approval (see Appendix A), the survey containing all study measures was deployed via Connect Cloud. Respondents were advised that their participation was voluntary and that they could discontinue the study at any time, but that their compensation would be contingent upon full completion of the survey. Once informed consent was provided participants were given access to the survey, which assessed demographic information (i.e., age, gender, race, ethnicity, marital status, education, tenure, number of hours worked per week, occupational field, and industry-related information), PsyCap, employee well-being, and burnout.

Measures

PsyCap

Psychological capital was measured via Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio's (2007) PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ-12). The PCQ consists of 12 items that assess four dimensions of well-being (i.e., hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism). Items are measured using a 6-point Likert scale of agreement (1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*) (Luthans et al., 2007). The PCQ-12 consists of four separate factors that are then cumulatively scored to generate an overall composite PsyCap score. The reliability of the PCQ-12 was psychometrically supported in this study with acceptable Cronbach alpha values for the factors of hope ($\alpha = 0.85$), efficacy ($\alpha =$

0.87), resilience ($\alpha = 0.65$), and optimism ($\alpha = 0.80$). The overall reliability for the PCQ-12 was $\alpha = 0.90$.

Employee Well-being

Employee well-being was measured using Pradhan and Hati's (2022) employee well-being questionnaire. This questionnaire includes 31 items that collectively assess four dimensions of well-being (i.e., psychological, social, subjective, and workplace well-being). The current study featured three of these subscales (all except social well-being), resulting in a total of 21 items and three factors that are then cumulatively scored to create an overall composite employee well-being score. Items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale of agreement (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). The employee well-being questionnaire was psychometrically supported in this study, as the factors of psychological well-being ($\alpha = 0.80$), subjective well-being ($\alpha = 0.88$), and workplace well-being ($\alpha = 0.88$) all displayed acceptable Cronbach alpha values. The overall internal reliability of the measure was also acceptable, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha value of $\alpha = 0.92$.

Boreout

Employee boreout was measured using Stock's (2016) boreout questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of a total of 12 questions across three factors which include job boredom, crisis of meaning at work, and crisis of growth at work. Factors are cumulatively scored to generate an overall composite boreout score. Items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale of agreement (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). The reliability of the boreout questionnaire was psychometrically supported in this study, as acceptable Cronbach alpha values were obtained for each factor: job boredom ($\alpha = 0.84$), crisis of meaning at work ($\alpha = 0.93$), and

crisis of growth at work ($\alpha = 0.88$). The boreout questionnaire displayed an overall reliability of $\alpha = 0.94$.

Control Variables

Demographic variables, including gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship status, education, tenure, hours worked per week, occupation, and industry-related information were collected as potential control variables for the study. Demographic variables related to gender, age, tenure, and education were included as control variables in models attempting to predict employee well-being. The inclusion of these control variables for models predicting employee well-being is based on previous studies conducted by Avey and colleagues (2010), as well as Lopez-Martin and Topa (2019), which attempted to predict employee well-being from job resources (e.g., PsyCap). Meanwhile, the age and tenure were included as control variables for models attempting to predict boreout, as these demographic variables serve as control variables within research conducted by Stock (2015, 2016).

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

Initial analysis of means and standard deviations were calculated for continuous variables using the *psych* package (Revelle, 2012) in *R* (R Core Team, 2021), and correlations among all variables were calculated using the *Hmisc* package (Harrell, 2023) in *R* (R Core Team, 2021). As presented in Table 2, a series of significant correlations were evidenced among the study variables of interest. As expected, PsyCap was positively correlated with employee well-being ($r = .83, p = <.001$) and negatively correlated with boreout ($r = -.68, p = <.001$). These findings suggest that employees who experience increasing levels of PsyCap are more likely to report greater levels of employee well-being. However, it is important to note that the correlations between PsyCap and employee well-being are relatively high compared to those found in previous studies in which the correlation between PsyCap and employee well-being was $r = .55$ (Luthans et al., 2013). Similarly, results from Imran and Shahnawaz (2020) revealed a correlation of .72 between PsyCap and employee well-being. Furthermore, high levels of PsyCap were associated with low levels of boreout. Employee well-being was also negatively correlated with boreout ($r = -.83, p = <.001$), suggesting that experiencing boreout negatively impacts employee well-being. These high levels of correlation can potentially be attributed to the similarities between constructs and the measures used within this study.

Table 2.

<i>Descriptive Statistics and Correlations</i>								
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	39.11	10.07	-					
2. Tenure	7.24	5.71	0.45***	-				
3. Hours Worked (per week)	42.24	6.73	-0.01	-0.08	-			
4. PsyCap	57.15	8.35	0.02	0.07	0.13*	-		
5. EWB	119.78	18.17	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.83***	-	
6. Boreout	32.37	14.41	-0.05	-0.05	-0.09	-0.68***	-0.83***	-

PsyCap = Psychological Capital

EWB = Employee Well-being

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

To test Hypothesis 1, the *lavaan* package (Rosseel, 2012) in *R* (R Core Team, 2021) was utilized to conduct a multiple regression analysis (Model 1) to predict employee well-being from PsyCap, with gender, age, tenure, and education included as control variables. The standardized and unstandardized coefficients, standard errors, semi-partial correlations, and p-values for Model 1 are presented in Table 3. Model 1 was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.71$, $F(11, 264) = 58.56$, $p = <.0001$, 95% *CI* [0.63 0.75], with a significant main effect indicated for PsyCap. PsyCap was positively associated with employee well-being such that as an employee's level of PsyCap increased, the more likely they were to experience increasing levels of well-being. These results offer support for Hypothesis 1.

Table 3.*Multiple Regression Predicting Employee Well-being (Model 1)*

	β	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sr2</i>
Intercept	-0.09	15.52***	5.36	
PsyCap	0.82***	1.79	0.07	0.70
Gender				0.00
Male		-0.64	1.29	
Non-binary		8.78	0.07	
Age	0.00	0.03	0.07	0.00
Tenure	-0.01	-0.10	0.12	0.00
Education				0.01
Some College		-2.12	2.98	
Associate degree		2.86	2.98	
Bachelor's degree		1.31	2.59	
Master's degree		4.20	2.83	
Doctoral degree		4.99	5.12	
Professional degree		0.36	4.00	

PsyCap = Psychological Capital

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Multiple regression analysis (Model 2) was utilized to predict boreout from PsyCap while controlling for age and tenure. The standardized and unstandardized coefficients, standard errors, semi-partial correlations, and p-values for Model 2 are also displayed in Table 4. Model 2 was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.47$, $F(3, 274) = 80.18$, $p = <.0001$, 95% *CI* [0.37 0.548], as PsyCap significantly associated with boreout. PsyCap was significantly negatively associated with boreout, suggesting that as PsyCap increased, employees experienced less boreout. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was also supported.

Table 4.*Multiple Regression Predicting Boreout (Model 2)*

	β	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sr2</i>
Intercept	0.15	102.08***	5.04	
PsyCap	-0.68***	-1.18***	0.08	0.47
Age	-0.00	-0.06	0.07	0.00
Tenure	0.00	0.04	0.13	0.00

PsyCap = Psychological Capital

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Multiple regression analysis (Model 3) was used to predict employee well-being from boreout, with gender, age, tenure, and education serving as control variables. The standardized and unstandardized coefficients, standard errors, semi-partial correlations, and p-values for Model 3 are shown in Table 5. Model 3 was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.70$, $F(11, 264) = 56.37$, $p < .0001$, 95% CI [0.62 0.75], and boreout was significantly associated with employee well-being. Boreout was inversely associated with employee well-being such that as individuals experience higher levels of boreout, they are likely to experience lower levels of well-being. These results offer support for Hypothesis 3.

Table 5.
Multiple Regression Predicting Employee Well-being (Model 3)

	β	b	se	sr^2
Intercept	0.18	156.24***	3.86	
Boreout	-0.81***	-1.03***	0.04	0.69
Gender				0.00
Male		-1.61	1.30	
Non-binary		1.92	7.31	
Age	-0.11	-0.03	0.07	0.00
Tenure	-0.00	-0.02	0.12	0.00
Education				0.01
Some College		-4.75	3.02	
Associate degree		-2.94	3.03	
Bachelor's degree		-1.03	2.63	
Master's degree		0.85	2.89	
Doctoral degree		-7.00	5.18	
Professional degree		-1.82	4.06	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

In order to assess whether PsyCap moderated the relationship between employee well-being and boreout, a main effect model using multiple regression (Model 4) was utilized to predict employee well-being from boreout and PsyCap, while controlling for gender, age, tenure, and education. The standardized and unstandardized coefficients, standard errors, semi-partial correlations, and p-values for Model 4 are presented in Table 6. Model 4 was significant, $R^2 =$

0.83, $F(12, 263) = 105.40$, $p < .0001$, 95% $CI [0.78 \ 0.86]$, with boreout and PsyCap being significant predictors of employee well-being. As expected, boreout was negatively associated with employee well-being, indicating that as boreout increased, employee well-being decreased. Meanwhile, PsyCap was shown to be positively associated with employee well-being, such that as employees' levels of PsyCap increased, their well-being also increased.

Table 6.
Moderation Model Predicting Employee Well-Being

	Main Effect (Model 4)				Moderation (Model 5)			
	β	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sr2</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sr2</i>
Intercept	0.10	79.13***	6.28		0.09	77.38***	9.04	
Boreout	-0.48	-0.60***	0.04	0.69	-0.48***	-0.56***	0.18	0.69
PsyCap	0.50	1.08***	0.08	0.13	0.49***	1.11***	0.13	0.13
Boreout:PsyCap					-0.01	-0.00	0.00	0.00
Gender				0.00				0.00
Male		-0.68	0.99		-0.04	-0.67	0.99	
Non-binary		5.47	5.57		0.31	5.55	5.58	
Age	-0.00	-0.01	0.05	0.00	-0.00	-0.01	0.05	0.00
Tenure	-0.01	-0.09	0.09	0.00	-0.01	-0.09	0.10	0.00
Education				0.00				0.00
Some College		-3.01	2.30		-0.17	-3.00	2.30	
Associate degree		-0.22	2.31		-0.11	-0.21	2.32	
Bachelor's degree		-0.52	2.00		-0.03	-0.51	2.01	
Master's degree		1.16	2.20		0.06	1.17	2.20	
Doctoral degree		-0.39	3.97		-0.03	-0.50	3.99	
Professional degree		-1.31	3.09		-0.07	-1.29	3.09	

PsyCap = Psychological Capital

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

A multiple regression model (Model 5) was then created to determine whether PsyCap moderated the relationship between employee well-being and boreout while controlling for gender, age, tenure, and education. The standardized and unstandardized coefficients, standard errors, semi-partial correlations, and p-values for Model 5 are displayed in Table 6. Overall there were no significant changes in Model 5, $\Delta R^2 = 0.00$, $F(13, 262) = 96.94$, $p < .0001$, 95% CI

[0.78 0.86]. Model 5 displayed the same significant main effects indicated for both boreout and PsyCap as Model 4 with minimal changes ($< .01$) in standardized and unstandardized coefficients, standard errors, and p-values; however, the interaction between PsyCap and boreout was insignificant, suggesting that PsyCap did not moderate the relationship between boreout and employee well-being. Using the *olsrr* (Hebbali, 2020) package in *R* (R Core Team, 2021), further inspection of the main effect model (Model 4) through utilization of tolerance levels revealed that all variables upheld acceptable tolerance values of > 0.10 . Regardless, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among PsyCap, boreout, and employee well-being and to evaluate whether PsyCap moderates the relationship between boreout and employee well-being. Results supported Hypothesis 1, as PsyCap was positively associated with employee well-being. These findings suggest that higher levels of PsyCap are likely to correspond to increased employee well-being. Thus, efforts to enhance PsyCap appear to have far-reaching implications for employees' quality of work life. These findings are consistent with research from Avey and colleagues (2010), which suggest that PsyCap may serve as a resource to increase the psychological well-being of employees. These findings additionally relate to Youssef-Morgan and Luthan's (2015) model in which PsyCap was directly targeted as a means of increasing job satisfaction and objective work outcomes, ultimately generating further increases in employee well-being.

Hypothesis 2 was also supported. The results of this study indicated that PsyCap was negatively associated with employee boreout. Employees who reported higher levels of PsyCap experienced less boreout than employees with lower levels of PsyCap. The negative relationship between PsyCap and boreout evidenced in this study further supports Abubakar and colleagues' (2022) proposition that PsyCap was negatively associated with boreout due to PsyCap's ability to facilitate coping mechanisms for negative, stressful, and traumatic events.

Likewise, Hypothesis 3 was also supported, as the results of this study indicated that boreout was negatively associated with employee well-being. Employees who perceived higher levels of boreout also experienced lower levels of well-being. The inverse relationship between boreout and employee well-being is consistent with Abubakar and colleagues' (2022) contention that boreout is likely to adversely influence employee well-being due to the "...detrimental

impact [of boreout] on individuals through extreme dissatisfaction, stress, anxiety, and unhappiness, which lowers mental, emotional, and psychological energy” (p.31).

The results of this study did not support Hypothesis 4, as PsyCap did not moderate the relationship between boreout and employee well-being. This finding suggests that PsyCap did not significantly interact with nor influence the relationship between boreout and employee well-being, despite the relatively high correlations between the variables. This can potentially be caused by multicollinearity between variables as indicated by the high variance of the main effect model (Model 4 ($R^2 = 0.83$)), and high correlations among variables of interest. However, as previously noted, the current findings suggest that individuals who work in production occupations are more likely to report higher levels of employee well-being.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

One limitation of this study was that all data were collected cross-sectionally. As all of the data were collected at a single point in time, the temporal order of the variables could not be established, and causal attributions cannot be made. The cross-sectional design further restricts the ability to account for reverse effects.

The second limitation of this study is that data were collected via an online self-report survey; thus, the results may be susceptible to common method bias. In addition, self-evaluations of well-being may be subject to response distortion; thus, respondents may have provided overly positive or negative evaluations of their well-being. Subjectivity with respect to perceptions of the workplace is another potential limitation, although tapping into participants’ experiences of their workplace and their own well-being is nevertheless informative.

A final limitation of this study is the dearth of empirical research on PsyCap and boreout from which to form hypotheses. Although boreout has been recognized in organizations for over

a decade (Rothlin & Werder, 2008), very limited research has been conducted on boreout in recent years.

Future research should examine individual differences among employees and how these differences may influence their experiences of boreout. Specific personality traits such as neuroticism can increase negative perceptions and in turn amplify experiences of boredom, crisis of meaning, and crisis of growth related to their current occupation. Alternatively, individual differences in job commitment have the potential to mitigate boreout levels, as employees who experience higher levels of job commitment may be less likely to experience job boredom.

Although PsyCap did not moderate the relationship between boreout and employee well-being in this study, future research is warranted in this area. As PsyCap is negatively associated with boreout, and as a positive association between PsyCap and employee well-being has previously been established, other potential influences of PsyCap and boreout on well-being, including potential mediation by PsyCap, should be explored. The potential negative influence of boreout on PsyCap may potentially play a role in the relationship between PsyCap and employee well-being.

Conclusion

The current study was designed to examine the relationships among PsyCap, employee well-being, and boreout and to assess whether PsyCap moderates the relationship between boreout and employee well-being. Although results did not support moderation of PsyCap on the relationship between boreout and employee well-being, several other important findings emerged. Specifically, results suggested that PsyCap was associated with increased employee well-being and decreased boreout. Furthermore, boreout was associated with decreased employee well-being. These findings contribute to the growing research on PsyCap and boreout

and further clarify the implications of these constructs on employee well-being. Future research should examine individual differences with respect to job commitment and personality traits (e.g., neuroticism) and how these characteristics may influence experiences of boreout.

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Appendix: IRB Approval



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Notification of Amendment Approval

From : Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [Jennifer Bowler](#)
CC:
Date: 6/1/2023
Re: [Ame1 UMCIRB 22-002266](#)
[UMCIRB 22-002266](#)
Work-related perceptions and employee well-being

Your Amendment has been reviewed and approved using expedited review on 5/31/2023. It was the determination of the UMCIRB Chairperson (or designee) that this revision does not impact the overall risk/benefit ratio of the study and is appropriate for the population and procedures proposed.

Please note that any further changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

If applicable, approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Document	Description
Consent form (Employee well-being study)(0.02)	Consent Forms

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.