

# Employees' Psychosocial Beliefs and Workplace Attitudes

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## Abstract

As employees spend a great deal of their adult lives in the workplace, it is important to investigate their beliefs and attitudes toward the organizations in which they work. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore whether there were differences between United Kingdom and United States employees' perceptions of their well-being, psychological capital (PsyCap), occupational self-efficacy, interrole conflict, and attitudes about their workplace. This study also examined associations between employees' well-being, PsyCap, occupational self-efficacy, interrole conflict, and attitudes about their workplace. Lastly, the study explored if Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) could be used in the coding of employees' workplace attitudes. While there were no cross-national differences, there were significant associations between many of the variables. Moreover, while participants wrote positively about their workplaces and felt they generally aligned to their values, Maslow's Hierarchy (1943) did not demonstrate to be a useful theory to guide coding.

## Key Words:

Meaning in the workplace, psychological capital, well-being, United Kingdom, United States

Given that many people will spend the majority of their adult lives working in some type of occupation, it is important that workplaces run efficiently. In order for them to do so, employees need to feel motivated, satisfied, and engaged in their jobs. The perception of a poor working environment can result in a negative impact on the employee, thus translating into undesirable outcomes for the organization (Aarons & Sawitzky, 2006). Furthermore, organizations should also be mindful of cross-national differences in examining well-being at work (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000). Therefore, this study was concerned with whether cross-national differences have an impact on employees' beliefs and attitudes. Specifically, it examined if employees from the United States and United Kingdom differed in their level of employee well-being, psychological capital, occupational self-efficacy, interrole conflict, and attitudes about their workplace. Additionally, this study explored employees' workplace attitudes regarding workplace meaningfulness, building relationships,

feeling valued, and reaching their full potential in the workplace.

## Well-being

In recent decades, research on well-being has expanded into the organizational psychology domain. Specifically, it has been reported that workplaces with stressful conditions can negatively influence the physical and psychological well-being of employees (Spector & Jex, 1998). While psychological well-being is a rather broad concept, it is defined in this paper as the degree to which people view their lives positively, their emotional stability, and overall satisfaction with life (Diener, 1984; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). In this paper, physical well-being is then conceptualized as the health of employees, such as their blood pressure or frequency of illness (Danna & Griffin, 1999). It is important to note that well-being is focused less on objective evaluations and rather on subjective interpretations by individuals (Diener, 1984). Positive well-being has been found to be an

indicator of enhanced job performance and job satisfaction within an organization (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000); however it should be noted that there are many components that influence employees' positive regard toward the workplace such as the freedom to make decisions and be independent (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004).

Organizations should be concerned with employee well-being since the presence of poor well-being can lead to negative business outcomes (Danna & Griffin, 1999). For example, employees with poor physical health may not perform to their highest potential (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Robertson, Birch, & Cooper, 2012). More positive attitudes toward work can boost employees' work ethic and engagement levels, which have resulted in organizational success (Robertson et al., 2012). Thus, a focus toward cultivating an environment where employees can display positive well-being can help organizations increase overall productivity.

### **Interrole Conflict**

Interrole conflict is defined as strains from one's work permeating into one's life outside of work (Kahn, 1964). Interrole conflict typically focuses on the strain between one's work and family life are impacted by each other. Examples of interrole conflict include how working long hours can prevent a parent from spending time with their child in the evening or how taking care of a sick child can prevent a parent from completing their work. Due to the rise in dual-earner career families, more individuals must now balance the responsibilities between the work and family sector, which may be perceived by some as incompatible roles (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). It is believed that the conflict of demands from both work and family demands can create a sense of strain within individuals, which can have detrimental consequences for those who experience high levels of strain (Barnett & Baruch, 1985).

Interrole conflict has been found to play a role in the relationship of parental care stress and well-being (Stephens, Townsend, Martire & Druley, 2001). It has also been found that interrole conflict is associated with increased absenteeism in the workplace (Barling, MacEwen, Kelloway, &

Higginbottom, 1994). With such pressures from work and family, employees could experience a decline in well-being and quality of life (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992).

### **Psychological Capital**

Psychological Capital (PsyCap), is an individual's positive state that is characterized by their degree of self-efficacy to achieve tasks, having optimism about the future, persevering and adapting to achieve goals, and demonstrating resiliency when faced with problems (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). It has been noted that the presence of intervention models focused on increasing employees' levels of positive PsyCap, can result in heightened job performance (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Peterson, 2010). PsyCap is seen as a motivating factor to encourage employees to work hard and produce quality results, thus increasing job satisfaction toward their organization (Larson & Luthans, 2006; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). Additionally, higher levels of PsyCap have also been related to reduced intentions to leave the organization and more positive organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g., going above and beyond in their job; Avey et al., 2008; Larson & Luthans, 2006). From a recruiting standpoint, displaying high levels of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience is thought to be predictive of positive work attitudes and behaviors (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2008).

PsyCap has also been found to be a predictor of personal, professional, and psychological well-being (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010; Baron, Franklin, & Hmieleski, 2016). In an organizational context, it is reported that high levels of PsyCap are related to lower levels of work-related stress (Abbas & Raja, 2015; Baron et al., 2016). While research regarding PsyCap and physical well-being is less prominent, a study found that military personnel before deployment were less likely to be diagnosed with a mental illness after returning from their service if they had higher levels of PsyCap (Krasikova, Lester, & Harmes, 2015). It has also been noted that PsyCap in business leaders serves as a moderator between mindfulness and

lower instances of mental illness (Roche, Haar, & Luthans, 2014).

### **Occupational Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy was first developed by Bandura (1977) and is defined as an individual's level of confidence to successfully accomplish a certain task. Based on the work of Bandura, the term, occupational self-efficacy was created to describe an individual's degree of confidence to undertake different jobs and tasks in the workplace (Rigotti, Schyns, & Mohr, 2008). It is imperative that employees feel capable in the workplace as it could impact their well-being and productivity in the workplace.

Occupational self-efficacy is important because it is associated with positive outcomes for employees. Employees with high self-efficacy have been found to also have high job satisfaction (Jill & Bono, 2001). It has also been found that occupational self-efficacy plays an important role in employee engagement (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). These productive outcomes for employees can also be beneficial for workplace outcomes. To illustrate, Judge and Bono (2001) found that occupational self-efficacy is positively related to performance. Moreover, with higher performance, organizations can reap more organizational success and position itself to have a better competitive advantage.

### **Meaning at Work**

Meaning at work is the idea that employees find some type of importance in their work (Rosso, 2010). It is a concept that is subjectively developed by an individual, a group of people, or a combination of both (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). While meaningfulness is constructed and spans across many different areas of research (Rosso, Dekas, Wrzesniewski, 2010), this study focuses on the psychological aspects of meaning from a work context.

Perceiving work as meaningful has many important implications. Work that is seen as meaningful has been found to be an internally motivating factor in the workplace for productivity (Hackman & Oldman, 1976) and has further been found to be a

mediator between motivational characteristics and work outcomes (i.e. autonomy, skill variety, task identity, task significance; Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Moreson, 2007). Additionally, work meaningfulness has demonstrated to be an important element for employee engagement (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). Having meaning in work has been linked to less absenteeism and higher job satisfaction (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). Furthermore, employees with meaningful workplaces identify more strongly with their company (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006) and feel a sense of personal satisfaction (Kahn, 2007). From an organizational effectiveness perspective, employees with meaning in their work have been found to have higher levels of performance (Hackman & Oldman, 1980). Taken together, it can be seen that work meaningfulness is a crucial component of positive organizational beliefs, which can have benefits for the employee and their company.

### **The Present Study**

This study explored whether there were cross-national differences between employees in the United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US) in relation to their well-being, PsyCap, occupational self-efficacy, interrole conflict, and attitudes about their workplace. Past literature has investigated differences in job satisfaction between employees in the UK and US (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000); however, there is less evidence about other psychosocial components that could impact employee perceptions toward their work environment. It was expected that UK employees would report higher levels of PsyCap, physical well-being, and psychological well-being compared to US employees. It was also believed that UK employees would endorse their work more positively than US employees in terms of finding meaning, building relationships, feeling valued, and feeling capable of reaching their full potential in the workplace. In addition, it was predicted that UK employees would write differently about their perceptions of meaningful work compared to US employees. Furthermore, it was believed that UK employees would perceive their employers as being

more aligned to their definition of meaningful work compared to employees in the US.

In addition, this study also investigated whether there were associations between employees' well-being, PsyCap, occupational self-efficacy, interrole conflict, and attitudes about their workplace. It was believed that PsyCap would be positively related to both physical and psychological well-being. It was also expected that interrole conflict would be negatively related to physical and psychological well-being. Furthermore, it was predicted that occupational self-efficacy would be positively related to physical and psychological well-being. It was also expected that there would be a positive relation between physical and psychological well-being. Additionally, it was expected that interrole conflict would be positively associated with occupational self-efficacy and PsyCap.

Lastly, the study explored whether Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) could be used to guide binary and thematic coding of employees' workplace attitudes. It was expected that most employees would perceive that their employers allow them to find meaning, build relationships, feel valued, and feel capable of reaching their full potential in the workplace. In addition, it was believed that PsyCap, physical well-being, and psychological well-being would influence how employees endorsed their workplace attitudes mentioned above. It was also predicted that most employees would feel that their organization aligned to their perceptions of a meaningful workplace. While the study openly explored how employees would define meaningful work, it was believed that participants would include all components related Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) pyramid, but a greater proportion would be related to the upper portion of the pyramid (i.e. social, esteem, self-actualization).

## Method

### Participants

For the quantitative portion of the survey, participants were recruited from Prolific Academic to participate in this study if they had: obtained at

least a high school diploma or the equivalence, were employed full-time, and resided in either the United Kingdom (UK) or the United States (US). A total of 160 participants completed the survey; 51% lived in the UK and 49% lived in the US (See Table 1). In the UK sample, 63% earned less than \$50,000 (£49,921), whereas 6% earned more than \$75,000 (£61,386). In the US sample, 36% earned less than \$50,000, whereas 30% earned more than \$75,000. In the UK sample, 67% of participants had earned a bachelor's degree and 33% were pursuing or had earned a graduate degree. In the US, 55% of participants had earned a bachelor's degree, 41% were pursuing or had earned a graduate degree, and 1.3% of respondents did not respond.

For the qualitative portion of the study, only the Prolific Academic participants from the quantitative survey, and who retained eligibility, had the option to participate. A total of 106 participants answered the free-response questions; 51% lived in the UK and 49% lived in the US (See Table 1). In the UK sample, 59.3% earned less than \$50,000 (£49,921), whereas 7.4% earned more than \$75,000 (£61,386). In the US sample, 34.6% earned less than \$50,000, whereas 25% earned more than \$75,000. In the UK sample, 69% of participants had earned a bachelor's degree and 32% were pursuing or had earned a graduate degree. In the US sample, 54% of participants had earned a bachelor's degree, and 46% were pursuing or had earned a graduate degree.

### Procedure

Participants completed a quantitative survey online through Prolific Academic, which took them approximately twenty minutes to complete, and they were compensated (£1.67/\$2.08) for participating in this portion of the study. After a three-month period, a subset of participants who still met the original eligibility criteria, participated in a qualitative portion of the study. The qualitative portion of study took participants approximately ten minutes to complete. They were, however, compensated at a higher rate (£1.67/\$2.21), for their completion of this portion of the study because it required reflecting and typing up responses

**Table 1. Participant Characteristics**

Demographic Variable	United Kingdom	United States
Quantitative part of study		
<i>Sample size</i>	82	78
<i>Age</i>	$M = 36.81$ years ( $SD = 9.59$ )	$M = 35.18$ years ( $SD = 10.55$ )
<i>Gender</i>	52% male	62% male
<i>Ethnicity</i>	86.6% Caucasian	74.4% Caucasian
<i>Marital Status</i>	61% married/cohabitating	43.6% married/cohabitating
<i>Children</i>	59.8% no children	59% no children
Qualitative part of study		
<i>Sample size</i>	54	52
<i>Age</i>	$M = 36.98$ years ( $SD = 8.84$ )	$M = 35.92$ years ( $SD = 11.35$ )
<i>Gender</i>	59% male	58% male

*Note:* One individual from the UK and one individual from the US did not provide their age on the quantitative part of the study

## Measures

**Demographic Questionnaire.** Participants were asked to complete a series of demographic questions that included, but were not limited to: their age, gender, country of residence, education level, race/ethnicity, marital status, number of children, salary, and occupation.

**Interrole Conflict Scale.** The 8-item Interrole Conflict Scale (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983) was used to examine participants' perceptions of interrole conflict using a 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale; an overall mean score was calculated.

**Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale.** The 6-item Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale (Rigotti et al., 2008) was used to examine participants' perceptions

of work self-efficacy using a 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) scale; an overall mean score was calculated.

**Psychological Capital Short Form Questionnaire.** The 12-item Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans et al., 2007) was used to examine participants' perceptions of PsyCap using a 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) scale. Responses were calculated into a single scale ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

**Short Form Health Survey.** The 12-item Short Form Health Survey (Ware, Kosinski, & Keller, 1996) was used to assess participants' well-being, from which separate psychological and physical well-being scores were calculated. Items were answered on a four-point scale with varying anchors, higher scores were indicative of more positive perceptions of participants' well-being.

**Qualitative Survey Questions.** In addition to participants' responses on the quantitative survey, the main components from Maslow's Hierarchy (1943) served as the motivation behind the question construction of the qualitative survey. Maslow's Hierarchy is a motivational theory that focuses on the needs of people. Situated in a hierarchical pyramid, these needs vary from the most basic needs (i.e., physiological needs) to complex needs (e.g., self-actualization). To achieve a higher, more complex need, the more basic needs must be first satisfied. For the purpose of this study, we focused on the higher needs involving: safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

**Binary Coding.** Four questions were asked of participants: (1) How important is it to you whether you are able to find meaning in your work and why? (2) In what ways does your organization allow you to build relationships at work? (3) In what ways does your organization make you feel valued at work? (4) In what ways does your organization make you feel like you are capable of reaching your full potential? Participants' responses were reviewed and coded with a Yes/No indication of themes' presence in participants' responses. To ensure reliability in responses, two coders analyzed the Yes/No coding using Microsoft Excel. Of the 106 responses for the first question, 90% of the coding was the same. Question two generated 103 responses, 89% of the coding was the same. Of the 103 responses for question three, 91% of the coding was the same. Of the 103 responses for question four, 93% was the same. When there were inconsistencies between the coders' analyses, they discussed their reasoning behind their answer, and a final code given.

**Thematic Coding.** Two questions were asked of participants and then thematically coded: (1) What does the phrase "meaningful work" mean to you, and (2) How does the organization you work for align with the ideals that you described [for your ideal workplace environment]? After an initial round of thematic coding where the first author looked at all of the responses, the themes were created based on patterns of similar phrases in the qualitative data. Once themes were created, participants' responses were reviewed and coded using a Yes/No coding for whether each theme was

present in participants' responses (i.e., responses could have more than one theme). The primary coder coded all 106 responses for each question in Microsoft Excel. To ensure codes were reliable, a secondary researcher coded a random selection of 31 of the responses. Inter-rater agreement was low (~50%) for these thematic codes; however, it should be noted that the secondary researcher had less exposure to Maslow's Hierarchy (1943) and Industrial/Organizational Psychology concepts. For each discrepancy between coding responses, both coders talked about their reasoning behind their answer, and a final code was given.

## Results

All quantitative analyses were conducted using SPSS. Analyses were first conducted to explore possible differences between UK and US employees. Independent samples *t*-tests with country of residence as the grouping factor were conducted for PsyCap, psychological well-being, and physical well-being. In investigating possible differences in the way UK and US employees wrote about the organizations, chi-squared analyses were conducted. Contrary to expectations, there were no differences found in UK and US employees' perceptions of PsyCap, well-being, the way in which they endorsed their work, or the number of themes they included in their responses about their workplace attitudes, *p*'s > .05. Thus, country of residence was not included in further analyses.

Correlations were used to examine associations in the variables listed above for all participants regardless of their country of residence (See Table 2). It was found that PsyCap was positively associated with psychological well-being; however, it was not significantly correlated with physical well-being. Likewise, higher interrole conflict scores (i.e., less conflict) was associated with higher psychological well-being, but not physical well-being. Moreover, results revealed that there was a positive association between occupational self-efficacy and psychological well-being; however, there was no correlation found between occupational self-efficacy and physical well-being. These findings suggest that psychological well-being is more strongly associated with PsyCap, interrole conflict, and occupational self-efficacy

than physical well-being. In comparing psychological and physical well-being, it was found that the two variables were negatively correlated. This finding suggests that higher levels of psychological well-being are associated with lower levels of physical well-being. Interrole conflict, however, was not associated with occupational self-efficacy or PsyCap. Lastly, PsyCap was highly correlated with occupational self-efficacy; however, these results were expected since self-efficacy is a

construct similar to that of PsyCap. To study the percentage of participants who endorsed aspects of their work, descriptive statistics were conducted. It was found that 81.9% considered it to be important to find meaning in their work. Moreover, 85.1% noted that their organization allows them to build relationships with other employees, 72.2% believed that their organization makes them feel valued, and 70.1% believed their organization made them feel like they could reach their full potential.

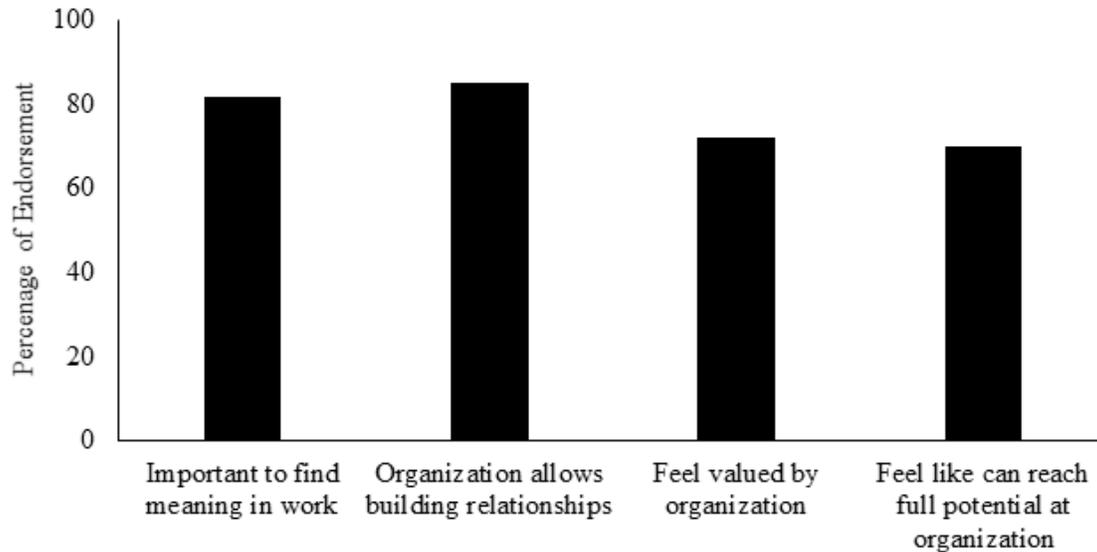
**Table 2.** *Correlations Between Variables of Focus*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Psychological well-being	-	-.27***	.36***	.25**	.31***
Physical well-being		-	.04	.07	.02
PsyCap			-	.00	.72***
Interrole Conflict				-	-.04
Occupational Self-efficacy					-

*Note:* Variables repeat in the same order across the columns as they do in the rows.

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

**Figure 1:** *Participants' endorsement of specific aspects of their work.*



Binary logistic regressions were then conducted to examine if PsyCap and well-being influenced whether employees endorsed positive aspects about their work. All variables were centered before being entered into Step 1 of the model, and interactions between the terms were created and entered into Step 2 of the models. Separate models were conducted for each of the four questions that were binary coded. Given the number of analyses conducted, a Bonferroni reduced p-value of .0125 was used to determine significance. None of the models were significant at either Step 1 ( $p's \geq .458$ ) or Step 2 ( $p's \geq .062$ ). Thus, participants' PsyCap, their well-being, nor the interaction of the two significantly predicted the way they endorsed their jobs.

Exploratory descriptive statistics were then used to explore the number of participants who incorporated identified themes into their responses on workplace attitudes. The percentages provided below are for within each theme rather than across themes. In describing what "meaningful work" meant to participants, eight themes were identified: feeling like the work is ethical (.9%), being provided developmental opportunities (10.4%), being rewarded fairly (14.2%), feeling productive (14.2%), doing work that is engaging (17%), feeling purposeful (23.6%), being able to make a difference (34%), and feeling fulfilled by the work (41.5%). It was found that participants identified between 0 and 4 themes ( $M = 1.56, SD = .77$ ) in their responses. In

responding to how the organization that they work for aligns with their perceptions of an ideal workplace environment, 67% believed their workplace aligned with their ideal while 42.5% suggested that their workplace failed to align with their ideal. Seven themes were identified for workplace alignment and seven themes were found for misalignment of an ideal workplace environment. Organizational alignment themes included: employees enjoy coworkers (1.9%), employees are recognized for their work (1.9%), ethical behaviors engaged in (4.7%), employees help each other (7.5%), open communication encouraged (8.5%), good working conditions (11.3%), and good work environment (17%). Based on their replies, it was found that participants identified between 0 and 4 themes ( $M = .53, SD = .84$ ) in their responses. The themes organizational misalignment included: not engaging in open communication (2.8%), demonstrating favoritism (2.8%), not providing opportunities for development (2.8%), poor working conditions (4.7%), not being rewarded fairly for work (5.7%), organization only being concerned with own needs (7.5%), and poor working environment (8.5%). It was found that participants identified between 0 and 3 themes ( $M = .35, SD = .59$ ) within their responses.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was (1) to examine whether there were differences between employees in the UK and US based on their responses, (2) to

explore associations between well-being, PsyCap, interrole conflict, occupational self-efficacy, and how employees wrote about their jobs, and (3) investigate the effectiveness of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) regarding participants' workplace attitudes.

We found that country of residence did not significantly impact employees' perceptions of PsyCap, well-being, or workplace attitudes. This could perhaps be related to our limited sample size and self-selection of participants into the study; however, it is also important to note that the UK and US share similar cultural identities (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Other than long-term orientation, the UK and the US are known to be fairly close when it comes to Hofstede's (n.d.) cultural dimensions. To illustrate, both countries tend to have a lower power distance, are highly individualistic, value masculine societies, have lower uncertainty avoidance, and display high indulgence (Hofstede, n.d.). Based on this notion, perhaps the UK and the US are too similar cultures to compare whether there are significant differences in employees' work values and perceptions.

Moreover, examining well-being is important because it is positively associated with job satisfaction and performance, thus beneficially impacting the workplace (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Poor health can decrease well-being and result in absences from work, lack of quality performance, and increased turnover, which can result in an extra financial burden for organizations (Stewart, 2003). A negative association between psychological well-being and physical well-being was found in this project, which was surprising given the fact that physical activity is often positively related to mental well-being (Fox, 1999). These results may be related to the smaller sample size or the decision to use the Short Form Health Survey to study well-being (Ware et al., 1996).

While interrole conflict was expected to be associated with psychological well-being, it was surprising that it was not also related to physical well-being because the mind and body are found to often be related to each other (Fox, 1999). In addition, while the literature on interrole conflict

and PsyCap is not extensive, it was still expected that there would be an association between the two variables since PsyCap has been found to influence well-being. It was believed that a high interrole conflict could have a negative emotional impact; therefore, it was also assumed that it would influence PsyCap subsets. While further studies should try to confirm the finding, it is still important to note that research has shown the negative impact that work-family conflict can have on employees and their psychological well-being (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992). Therefore, it is recommended that employers place a high regard for establishing good work-life balance practices in the organization. To help eliminate such burden on employees and possible financial losses to the organization, companies should focus on incorporating more family-friendly policies such as flex-time, flexible working areas, and paid parental leave.

In addition, PsyCap has been consistently seen in the literature as a successful forecaster of positive work attitudes (Avey et al., 2008) and job performance (Luthans, 2002), which led to this project's exploration of its association with well-being. Aligned with past research (Avey et al., 2010), PsyCap was positively associated with psychological well-being. From these results, we can assume that employees possessing higher levels of PsyCap may also have higher psychological well-being, meaning they are happier and positive overall (Diener, 1984), which could then be extended into the workplace. It was surprising that PsyCap did not relate to physical well-being as past studies have found evidence that PsyCap negatively relates to conditions like depression and anxiety, which have negative physical symptoms (Roche et al., 2014). Regardless, employers should try to foster a positive well-being and PsyCap at work through policies, events, and values that allow an employee to feel that their organization cares for them and wants them to be happy.

Moreover, neither PsyCap, well-being, nor their interaction influenced how employees endorsed their workplaces. The descriptive statistics based on participants' written responses indicated that the majority of individuals felt positively about their

organization, particularly indicating that their work was meaningful, and they could socialize with their coworkers. While positive personal perceptions (e.g., PsyCap and well-being) might influence the way they view their work environment, these employees noted they worked in a positive environment, which may have limited the possible influence of PsyCap and well-being on their workplace attitudes.

When exploring how participants wrote about attitudes through the themes, participants said that meaningful work mostly meant feeling fulfilled by their occupation. In addition, two-thirds of participants believed their organization aligned with their values of an ideal workplace. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that people are intrinsically motivated to choose their work and organizations. Therefore, employers should portray the ways the organization can fulfill the values of potential candidates. When participants felt their organization aligned with their workplace ideals, they were more likely to attribute it to a good work environment. On the other hand, when ideals did not align, they mentioned a poor work environment.

### **Limitations**

This study obtained its data using self-report measures. This is important because employees' perceived notions of their organizational environment may differ from the actual levels if studied at another time; thus, there may be limited reliability in their responses. There is also the potential of response bias in our data. Additionally, due to funding constraints, the sample size of participants was relatively small, which would have reduced power for analyses and, subsequently, the results for all analyses were conducted separately for the UK and US participants. However, because there were no significant differences between the subsamples and we were able to conduct the analyses on the full sample, we had an appropriate power level for the analyses. Also related to our sample, participants were employed in a variety of different industries. Different industries or organizations may have different and distinct organizational environments, which were not able to be controlled for and could have impacted the results. Lastly, our use of Maslow's Hierarchy of

Needs (1943) for theme generation, may not have fully captured the themes within the data.

### **Future Directions**

In order to obtain a more representative sample, future research may consider studying a specific industry type to increase results' specificity. If only participants within a particular transnational organization or specific industry were sampled, perhaps there may have been stronger correlations and more significant differences between the countries or the variables of interest. Additionally, future researchers should consider collecting data from coworkers and supervisors at one organization (i.e., dyadic data) to compare their perceptions of the workplace. Researchers may also consider collecting data from a larger sample to obtain more varied responses and have greater power for their analyses. For example, while prior research has focused a great deal on psychological well-being, less attention has been given to physical well-being. The latter can be a costly factor to employers, and so further clarifying its association with workplace attitudes and performance is imperative. On the other hand, similar or smaller sample sizes would permit the use of Grounded Theory in the identification of themes within participants' responses. Such research is particularly relevant since we found that when participants' work ideals were not aligned to their reality, they perceived themselves working in a poor environment.

### **Conclusion**

The results further strengthen the contention that employers should concern themselves with whether employees have positive perceptions of their work environments. Our results suggest that interventions developed by human resource departments to enhance PsyCap, well-being, work-life balance, interrole conflict, work meaningfulness, and workplace attitudes may be generalized to both the UK and US. Moreover, our findings imply that employers should focus on branding their company to attract potential candidates. For example, they could communicate how the work environment is engaging and fulfilling for employees. This study is an initial step in exploring these relations and encouraging researchers to consider other

theoretical frameworks in their development of qualitative questions and analyses of workplace attitudes.

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