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THE EFFECT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL ON WORK ENGAGEMENT IN NURSES WITH WORK MEANINGFULNESS AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE

Debby Grace Anastasia Sirait[1*], Salamiah Sari Dewi[2], Yudistira Fauzy Indrawan[3]

[123]Program Studi Magister Psikologi, Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas Medan Area, Jl. Setia Budi No. 79 B/ Jl. Sei Serayu No. 70 A, Tanjung Rejo, Kecamatan Medan Sunggal, Kota Medan, 20112, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

[a]*E-mail: anastasiadebby21@gmail.com*
[b]*E-mail: salamiahsaridewi@staff.uma.ac.id*
[c]*E-mail: yudistira@staff.uma.ac.id*

(*) Corresponding Author
anastasiadebby21@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT
Work engagement is an important factor in supporting the quality of nursing care. Given the high demands of nursing work, psychological resources can play an important role in increasing nurses' work engagement. This study aims to examine the influence of psychological capital on work engagement and the role of work meaningfulness mediation in nurses at Vita Insani Hospital. This study uses a quantitative approach with Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis. Data were collected using the adapted Positive Psychological Capital Capital Questionnaire, Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI) scale, and the adapted Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17). The results showed that psychological capital had a positive and significant effect on work engagement ($\beta = 0.170$, $p = 0.015$) and work meaningfulness ($\beta = 0.546$, $p < 0.000$). Work meaningfulness also had a positive and significant effect on work engagement ($\beta = 0.512$, $p < 0.000$). Furthermore, work meaningfulness partially mediated the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement (indirect effect $\beta = 0.280$, $p < 0.000$). These findings show that psychological capital is related to higher work meaningfulness, which in turn is related to higher work engagement in nurses. Therefore, hospitals can consider various efforts to strengthen psychological capital and work meaningfulness in nurses as part of efforts to support work attachment.

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INTRODUCTION

Nurses are health workers who have an important role in providing nursing care to patients. In carrying out their duties, nurses face various demands, such as handling various patient conditions, shift work systems, administrative tasks, and coordination with other health workers. These conditions can cause physical and

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psychological pressure so that work engagement is an important aspect to pay attention to. Schaufeli et al. (2002) explained that work engagement is a positive psychological condition characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

One of the factors related to work engagement is psychological capital, which consists of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007). These psychological resources help individuals face the demands and difficulties of work. Research by Syam & Arifin (2021) on nurses shows that psychological capital has a positive and significant effect on work engagement. In addition, work meaningfulness, which is an individual's perception of the value, purpose, and meaning of their work (Steger et al., 2012), is also related to work attachment. The meaning of work can be felt by nurses through the experience of helping patients and contributing to others. Research by Pratiwi et al. (2021) and Samudra et al. (2025) supports the positive relationship between work meaningfulness and work engagement.

The relationship between psychological capital and work meaningfulness also received empirical support. Dewanda (2020) found a positive and significant influence of psychological capital on work meaningfulness in banking employees. In addition, the meta-analysis of Liu et al. (2025) identified psychological capital as one of the personal resources related to work meaningfulness. These findings provide a basis for examining work meaningfulness as a mechanism that explains the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement. Individuals with good psychological capital have the potential to view their work more positively and find value in work, which can further support attachment to work. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between the three variables in an integrated manner, especially through the mediating role of work meaningfulness in nurses.

This study aims to analyze the influence of psychological capital on work engagement, the influence of psychological capital on work meaningfulness, the effect of work meaningfulness on work engagement, and the role of work meaningfulness mediation in the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement. The results of the study are expected to enrich the study of Industrial and Organizational Psychology and become a consideration for hospitals in supporting nurses' work attachment.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research method to test the influence of psychological capital on work engagement through work meaningfulness as a mediation variable. The population of this study is 181 inpatient nurses in a hospital in Pematangsiantar. The sampling technique uses total sampling, so that all members of the population are used as research samples.

Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire consisting of three instruments. Psychological capital was measured using the Positive Psychological Capital Scale compiled by Manurung (2016) based on the theory of Luthans et al. (2007). Work meaningfulness was measured using the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI) developed by Steger et al. (2012) and adapted into Indonesian by Rahmi et al. (2019). Meanwhile, work engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-17 (UWES-17) which was adapted into Indonesian by Shaleh et al. (2025). The psychological capital and work meaningfulness instruments used a four-point Likert scale, while UWES-17 used a five-point frequency response scale according to the questionnaire used in the study.

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS software. The analysis included evaluation of measurement models (outer models) to assess the validity and reliability of constructs, as well as evaluation of structural models (inner models) to test relationships between variables. Hypothesis testing and the mediating role of work meaningfulness was carried out through a bootstrapping procedure with reference to path coefficients, t-statistical values, and p-values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

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This study involved 181 inpatient nurses. The respondents were female, namely 168 people (92.82%), male respondents amounted to 13 people (7.18%). Based on the working period, as many as 92 respondents (50.83%) had worked for less than five years, 60 respondents (33.15%) had a working period of 5-10 years, and 29 respondents (16.02%) had worked for more than ten years.

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that psychological capital, work engagement, and work meaningfulness were in the medium category. The empirical average value of psychological capital was 58.76, work engagement was 59.01, and work meaningfulness was 32.57. These findings show that respondents have positive psychological resources, work attachment, and perception of work meaningfulness at a moderate level.

Measurement model testing (outer model) was carried out to evaluate the validity and reliability of psychological capital, work engagement, and work meaningfulness constructs. Evaluation included internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. After several indicators were eliminated based on the results of the initial evaluation, the final model consisted of 12 indicators of psychological capital, 8 indicators of work engagement, and 7 indicators of work meaningfulness. A summary of the results of the evaluation of reliability and convergent validity is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Results of Convergent Reliability and Validity Evaluation (Outer Model)

Variable	CA	CR (rho_c)	AVE
Psychological capital	0,912	0,926	0,511
Work meaningfulness	0,839	0,879	0,510
Work engagement	0,866	0,894	0,517

Based on Table 1, all constructs had Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50. These results showed that all three constructs met the internal reliability and convergent validity criteria. Discriminant validity also showed adequate results, with the highest HTMT value of 0.676 and the Fornell-Larcker criterion result meeting the requirements. In addition, the SRMR value of 0.070 indicates that the model met the feasibility criteria used in this study. Thus, the measurement model can be used to continue the evaluation of the structural model.

An evaluation of the structural model (inner model) was carried out to assess the model's ability to explain endogenous variables and test the relationships between variables. The R^2 value of work meaningfulness of 0.298 showed that 29.8% of the variation in work meaningfulness could be explained by psychological capital. Meanwhile, the R^2 value of work engagement of 0.386 showed that 38.6% of the variation in work attachment could be explained together by psychological capital and work meaningfulness. The Q^2 predictive value for work meaningfulness was 0.278 and work engagement was 0.186, both of which are greater than zero. These results showed the predictive relevance of the model. Furthermore, hypothesis testing and mediation were carried out through a bootstrapping procedure. A summary of the results is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Intervariable Relationship Test Results

Intervariable Relationships	*β*	*T statistics*	*P-values*
Psychological capital → Work meaningfulness	0,546	11,256	0,000
Psychological capital → Work engagement	0,170	2,441	0,015
Work meaningfulness → Work engagement	0,512	8,415	0,000
Psychological capital → Work meaningfulness → Work engagement	0,280	6,117	0,000

The results of the test showed that psychological capital had a positive and significant effect on work engagement ($\beta = 0.170$; $p = 0.015$). These findings indicate that positive psychological resources, which include self-

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efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, are related to increased work attachment of nurses. These results are in line with the concept of psychological capital as a personal resource that supports individual motivation and ability to face job demands (Luthans et al., 2007). In the framework of Job Demands–Resources (JD-R), personal resources also play a role in supporting motivational processes related to work attachment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). These findings are in line with the research of Syam & Arifin, (2021) which shows a positive relationship between psychological capital and work engagement in nurses.

Furthermore, psychological capital had a positive and significant effect on work meaningfulness ($\beta = 0.546$; $p < 0.000$). This coefficient shows that the relationship between psychological capital and work meaningfulness is stronger than its direct relationship with work attachment. Nurses who have confidence in their abilities, hope in achieving goals, optimism, and ability to rise from difficulties tend to have a more positive perception of the value and meaning of their work. These findings are in line with the view that personal psychological resources can help individuals interpret work experiences more positively. Dewanda's (2020) research on banking employees also found a positive and significant influence of psychological capital on work meaningfulness. Although the work context is different, these results provide empirical support for the relationship between the two variables.

The results of subsequent tests showed that work meaningfulness had a positive and significant effect on work engagement ($\beta = 0.512$; $p < 0.000$). These findings show that the higher the perception of nurses of the value, goals, and contributions of their work, the higher their attachment to work. In the context of nursing, work is not only related to the implementation of clinical tasks, but also to the experience of helping patients and contributing to the well-being of others. The meaning of this contribution can support the enthusiasm, dedication, and appreciation of nurses in carrying out their work. These results are in line with the research of Pratiwi et al. (2021) and Samudra et al. (2025), which found a positive relationship between work meaningfulness and work engagement.

Indirect effect testing showed that work meaningfulness mediated the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement ($\beta = 0.280$; $t = 6.117$; $p < 0.000$). Because the direct influence of psychological capital on work engagement also remained significant, these findings show a pattern of partial mediation. This means that the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement takes place through two paths, namely the direct path and the indirect path through work meaningfulness. Positive psychological resources are not only directly related to work attachment, but also related to the ability of nurses to view their work as something valuable and meaningful. This meaning is further related to a higher attachment to work.

Overall, the results of the study showed that the three variables had a positive and significant relationship according to the tested model. The main finding of this study is the role of work meaningfulness as a partial mediator in the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement. However, this study uses a cross-sectional design and self-report data, so the relationships found cannot be used to ensure causality. In addition, respondents came from one hospital and were limited to inpatient nurses. Therefore, generalization of results needs to be done carefully, and subsequent studies can use longitudinal designs and involve nurses from various service units and hospitals.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that psychological capital has a positive and significant effect on work engagement and work meaningfulness in nurses. In addition, work meaningfulness has a positive and significant effect on work engagement. The results of the mediation test show that work meaningfulness partially mediates the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement. These findings indicate that positive psychological capital is related to nurses' work attachment, both directly and through the perception of the meaning of work.

Practically, the results of this study show the importance of paying attention to psychological resources and work meaningfulness in an effort to support nurses' work attachment. Efforts to develop self-efficacy, hope, optimism,

and resilience can be considered along with activities that help nurses understand the value and contribution of their work. However, because this study uses a cross-sectional design and involves inpatient nurses from one hospital, the results cannot be confirmed and its generalization to other contexts is still limited. Further research is recommended using a longitudinal design and involving respondents from various hospitals or health care units.

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