



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NURSES' PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT

To determine the relationship between nurses' psychological capital and organizational democracy perceptions. The research was conducted in a descriptive and cross-sectional design. Data were collected from a total of 590 nurses working in a university hospital. Personal information form, Organizational Democracy Scale, and Psychological Capital Questionnaire were used in data collection. Number-percentage calculation, Independent Samples t-Test, one-way analysis of variance, Pearson's correlation analysis, simple linear regression analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis methods were used in the evaluation of the data. It was found that the general total of psychological capital was at a moderate level, and the mean score of the organizational democracy scale was below the moderate level. It has been determined that there is a significant relationship between nurses' psychological capital and organizational democracy levels. Manager nurses can determine strategies to improve the psychological capital of employees to strengthen their perception of organizational democracy.

Keywords: Nurse, psychological capital, organizational democracy, hope, resilience, optimism, self-efficacy

HEMŞİRELERİN PSİKOLOJİK SERMAYELERİ VE ÖRGÜTSEL DEMOKRASİ ALGILARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİLER

ÖZET

Hemşirelerin psikolojik sermayeleri ile örgütsel demokrasi algıları arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırma tanımlayıcı ve kesitsel desende yapılmıştır. Bir üniversite hastanesinde çalışan toplam 590 hemşireden veri toplanmıştır. Veri toplamada, tanıtıcı bilgi formu, Örgütsel Demokrasi Ölçeği ve Psikolojik Sermaye Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Verilerin değerlendirilmesinde sayı-yüzdelik hesaplama, bağımsız örneklem t testi, tek yönlü varyans analizi, pearson korelasyon analizi, basit doğrusal regresyon analizi ve çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada Psikolojik sermaye genel toplamının orta düzeyde, örgütsel demokrasi ölçeği puan ortalamasının ise orta düzeyin altında olduğu bulunmuştur. Hemşirelerin psikolojik sermaye ile örgütsel demokrasi düzeyleri arasında istatistiksel açıdan ileri düzeyde anlamlı bir ilişkinin olduğu belirlenmiştir. Yönetici hemşireler, çalışanların örgütsel demokrasi algılarını güçlendirmek için psikolojik sermayelerini geliştirecek stratejiler belirleyebilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hemşire, örgütsel demokrasi, umut, dirençlilik, iyimserlik, öz-yeterlik



1.Introduction

In institutions of societies that understand the importance and value of democracy, inter-organizational democracy is given importance and supported (Atac and Kose, 2017). In a democratic organizational setting, employees should be able to participate equally in decisions, criticize and be aware of the decisions and practices of the management. Managers should treat employees fairly and be accountable. Therefore, real democracy is needed not only to maintain the status of equality between organizational members and external stakeholders but also to address the organization's reason for existence (Bilge, Barbuta-Misu, Zungun, Virlanuta, and Guven 2020). Weber, Unterrainer, and Höge (2020) reported that Organizational Democracy refers to continuous, not temporary or occasional, broad-based and institutionalized employee participation. According to Carr and Mellizo (2015), organizational democracy is a form of governance directed by all individuals who have a stake in organizational performance. In other words, it is a governance system that values the goals and feelings of individuals as much as the goals of the organization, encourages individuals to contribute to the important organizational decisions, and allows the organization's activities and policies to be regulated by the group (Cheney, 1995). Battilana, Fuerstein, and Lee (2018) state organizational democracy as “organizational democracy is a flatter organizational form that is characterized by greater decision rights for employees, a special kind of organizational culture, and the possibility of employee ownership” (Battilana et al., 2018).

Organizational democracy can be directly affected by the type of organizational culture (self-criticism, team, and participatory culture) and some dimensions of organizational structure (such as decentralization, flat hierarchy, and less formalization). However, organizational democracy is associated with organizational commitment, self-efficacy, and improving work relationships. It has been reported to have a direct and significant impact on human resources outcomes including improving citizenship behavior and reducing turnover intentions, and organizational outcomes including organizational agility and organizational learning (Ahmed, Adeel, Ali, and Rehman, 2019; Safari, Salehzadeh, and Ghaziasgari 2018; Weber et al., 2020). Based on the results of their meta-analysis, Weber et al. (2020) firstly recommend applying direct forms of participation to organizations that want to benefit from democratization to develop a supportive climate, work motivation, job satisfaction, value-based commitment, or prosocial behavior at work. It is seen that the concept of organizational democracy is frequently associated with employee participation and satisfaction, a high level of innovation, and improved organizational performance (Geckil, Akpinar, and Tas, 2017).

It has been reported that organizational democracy can lead to positive changes in the individual's thoughts about his work, colleagues, and working conditions (Geckil et al., 2017). Considering the contribution of organizational democracy to the employees and the organization, practices to increase organizational democracy in the workplace are very important. Employees' perception of organizational democracy is as important as the practices that will ensure organizational democracy. For this reason, it may be beneficial for the organization to investigate the factors related to the perception of organizational democracy while performing democratic practices.

Based on the idea that the perception of organizational democracy may differ depending on the personal characteristics of the employees in the organization, it was decided to examine whether the employees' perception of their psychological capital is



related to their perception of organizational democracy. The concept of psychological capital was originally developed in the field of psychology. It is a high-order structure with four psychological sources: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Rani and Chaturvedula, 2018). Psychological capital goes beyond common measures of economic, social, and human capital (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, and Norman, 2007a). Therefore, it has become critical in today's turbulent business environment where superior performance is demanded under increasing stress levels (Tennakoon, 2017). Psychological capital is defined as the set of positive and improvable characteristics possessed by the individual. Psychological capital, which brings a new perspective to the fields of human resources and organizational behavior, is divided into subgroups as "self-efficacy", the individual's self-confidence to show the necessary effort for the job, "optimism", the positive approach to being successful now and in the future, "hope", the expectation for the achievement of goals and "resilience" that shows firm stance in the face of difficulties. (Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio, 2007b). Virga, Baciú, Lazăr, and Lupsa (2020) emphasized in their study that increasing the psychological capital level of employees increases the sustainability of working conditions.

As a result of the literature review, a limited number of studies were found in different populations to determine the relationship between psychological capital and organizational democracy, both in Turkey and abroad. However, no study was found with the population of nurses (Han and Garg, 2018; Geckil and Kocyigit, 2017). Both Han and Garg (2018) and Geckil, Ileri, Kaya, and Karadağ (2016) discussed organizational democracy as an antecedent of psychological capital.

It is anticipated that this study will contribute conceptually to the field of nursing. In addition to its contribution to the literature, it is thought that it will contribute positively to organizational performance. Considering the positive effects of the perception of organizational democracy on employees' job satisfaction and organizational performance, it will be determined whether interventions to increase the psychological capital of employees will be beneficial to increase the perception of organizational democracy. Thus, it will be possible to make initiatives and develop strategies to increase the perception of organizational democracy of nursing managers and organizational performance in turn.

This study was carried out to determine the relationship between the psychological capital of nurses and their perception of organizational democracy. For this purpose, answers to the following research questions were sought.

Regarding nurses participating in the research;

- What is the level of perception of psychological capital and organizational democracy?

- Is there a relationship between psychological capital and organizational democracy perception levels?

2. Method

2.1. Study Design

This is a descriptive, correlational and cross-sectional study.

2.2. Sample and participants

The data of the study were collected from nurses working in a university hospital in Istanbul between January and April 2019, where a total of 853 nurses have been working in the institution on the relevant dates. Although the sample size was determined as 265 nurses with the Known Sample Calculation Formula, the questionnaire was



distributed to a total of 600 nurses within the scope of the study to reach a larger group. The sample of the research consisted of 590 nurses who voluntarily participated in the study.

Of the nurses participating in the research, 90.5% are women, 62.9% are married, 37.3% are between the ages of 31-40, and 70.8% hold a Bachelor's degree. It was determined that 43.9% of nurses had professional experience and 32.4% had professional experience in the institution for more than 16 years. While 48.5% of the nurses work in the surgical department, 51.5% work in the internal department. 46.1% of the nurses work in the service, 36.4% in specialized units, and 17.5% in other units of the institution. 85.9% of the nurses do not have any management duties.

2.3. Instruments

The data collection tool was distributed to the nurses in a sealed envelope during working hours by the researchers and then collected back. The data collection tool consists of three parts: the introductory information form, the Psychological Capital Questionnaire, and the Organizational Democracy Scale.

Personal Information Form; In this section, there are questions about nurses' personal characteristics (gender, marital status, age, education) and professional characteristics (total professional experience, professional experience in the institution they work in, the unit, the department, and whether they take part in the management).

Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24); It was developed to measure employees' positive psychological capital perception by Luthans et al. (2007a) and adapted to Turkish by Cetin and Basim (2012) in Turkey. The 5-point Likert type scale is scored between "1-Strongly Disagree and 5-Strongly Agree". The psychological capital questionnaire consists of 24 items and four sub-dimensions (optimism, resilience, hope, and self-efficacy). Cetin and Basim (2012) have reported that internal consistency was found to be $\alpha=.91$. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was 0.91.

Organizational Democracy Scale; The scale developed by Geckil and Tikici (2015) is a 5-point Likert type scale scored between "1-Strongly Disagree and 5-Strongly Agree". The scale consists of 28 items in total and 6 sub-dimensions: participation-criticism (8 items), transparency (6 items), justice (5 items), equality (6 items), and accountability (3 items). The Cronbach's α coefficient of the scale was reported as 0.77 (Geckil and Tikici, 2015). In this study, Cronbach's α coefficient was found to be 0.95.

2.4. Statistical Analysis

SPSS 21 package program was used to evaluate the data. The normal distribution test was applied to the variables in determining the statistical programs to be used in the evaluation of the data. It was determined that the Skewness and Kurtosis values of the data were between -2 and +2 according to the normality test, and these values meet the normal distribution condition of the variables (George and Mallery, 2010). Descriptive (frequency, percentage, minimum-maximum-mean scores, and standard deviation) analyzes were used to determine nurses' demographic characteristics and scale scores. Correlational Pearson Moment Correlation, simple linear regression analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis were used to detect inter-metric relationships. The statistical results were considered significant at the level of $p<0.05$.

2.5. Ethical Aspect of the Research

Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the Ethics Committee of a university (research number 2018/1612, meeting number 21, date 14.12.2018). An official permission letter was obtained from the management of the institution where the research would be conducted, and permission to use the scale was obtained via e-mail



from the authors of the scale. Finally, informed consent forms were obtained from the nurses participating in the study.

2.6. Limitations of the Research

The limitation of the study is that a single university hospital constitutes the study universe. Since the concepts of organizational democracy and psychological capital researched in this study are rarely studied subjects in the nurse population, literature review in different disciplines has been interpreted in nursing.

3. Results

In this section, the findings obtained by data analysis of 590 nurses participating in the research in line with the research questions are given. The psychological capital questionnaire mean score of the nurses participating in the research was 3.64 ± 0.56 , with the highest mean score in the self-efficacy sub-dimension (3.84 ± 0.73) and the lowest mean score in the optimism dimension (3.29 ± 0.55) (Table 1). The mean score of the nurses' organizational democracy scale was 2.84 ± 0.78 . In the sub-dimensions of ODS, nurses got the highest mean score from the equality sub-dimension (3.27 ± 0.69), and the lowest mean score from the justice sub-dimension (2.43 ± 0.93) (Table 1).

Table 1. Psychological capital questionnaire and organizational democracy scale mean scores (N=590)

Scale and sub-dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation
PCQ-24	3.64	.56
Optimism	3.29	.55
Resilience	3.72	.66
Hope	3.71	.67
Self-efficacy	3.84	.73
Organizational Democracy Scale	2.84	.78
Participation-criticism	2.70	.96
Transparency	2.93	.97
Justice	2.43	.93
Equality	3.27	.69
Accountability	2.85	.99

When the relationship between the research concepts was examined, it was determined that there was a positive and highly significant relationship between nurses' psychological capital and its sub-dimensions and organizational democracy and its sub-dimensions ($0.428 > r > 0.121$; $p < 0.01$) (Table 2).


Table 2. The relationship between psychological capital and organizational democracy

		<i>PCQ-24</i>	Optimism	Resilience	Hope	Self-efficacy
<i>Organizational Democracy Scale</i>	<i>r</i>	.398*	.413*	.283*	.408*	.292*
Participation-criticism	<i>r</i>	.336*	.364*	.230*	.340*	.245*
Transparency	<i>r</i>	.415*	.397*	.296*	.428*	.325*
Justice	<i>r</i>	.220*	.306*	.121**	.240*	.123**
Equality	<i>r</i>	.399*	.277*	.347*	.403*	.343*
Accountability	<i>r</i>	.346*	.397*	.242*	.347*	.237*

* $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$ * $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$

The statistical values of the test ($t=10.527$; $p \leq 0.001$) and the model ($F=110.824$; $p \leq 0.001$) established to determine the effect of psychological capital on organizational democracy were found to be highly significant. There is a positive and significant relationship between psychological capital and organizational democracy ($r=0.398$; $p \leq 0.001$). The coefficient of determination value of the established model is $R^2=0.159$. According to this result, 15.9% of the change in nurses' perception of organizational democracy is explained by psychological capital. A one-unit increase in nurses' psychological capital levels leads to an increase of 0.549 units in their perception of organizational democracy (Table 3). As a result, it has been revealed that psychological capital affects organizational democracy significantly and positively in nurses.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of the sub-dimensions of the psychological capital questionnaire (optimism, resilience, hope, and self-efficacy) on organizational democracy (Table 4).

Table 3. The effect of psychological capital on organizational democracy

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	F	Model (p)
	B	Std. Error	β				
Constant	.840	.192		4.366	.000*	110,82	.000*
<i>PCQ-24</i>	.549	.052	.398	10.527	.000*		

$R = .398$; $R^2 = .159$; Adjusted $R^2 = .157$; * $p < 0.001$

The established regression analysis model ($F=40.628$; $p \leq 0.001$) is statistically significant. The t-statistical values indicating the significance of the regression coefficients was not significant for the dimensions of resilience ($t=-1.219$; $p=0.223$) and self-efficacy ($t=-1.227$; $p=0.220$), but statistically significant for optimism ($t=5.660$; $p \leq 0.001$) and hope ($t=4.959$; $p \leq 0.001$) sub-dimensions.

**Table 4.** The effect of PCQ-24 sub-dimensions on organizational democracy

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	VIF
	B	Standard error	β			
Constant	.651	.198		3.286	.001**	
Optimism	.366	.065	.258	5.660	.000*	1.551
Resilience	-.094	.077	-.080	-1.219	.223	3.204
Hope	.450	.091	.386	4.959	.000*	4.523
Self-efficacy	-.087	.071	-.082	-1.227	.220	3.319
F= 40.628; R ² = .217; R= .466; *p<0,001; model (p)=0,000*; Adjusted R ² = .212						

** p<0.01; Durbin-Watson= 1.740

The coefficient of determination of the established model is R²=.212. Accordingly, the effect of the optimism and hope sub-dimensions of the psychological capital questionnaire was found to be significant (Table 4).

According to the estimated model; while other sub-dimensions are constant, a one-unit increase in nurses' levels of optimism provides an increase of 0.366 units and a one-unit increase in hope levels provides an increase of 0.450 units in the dependent variable (organizational democracy). The individual effects of the optimism and hope sub-dimensions of the psychological capital questionnaire are statistically significant and positive.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the relationship between psychological capital levels and organizational democracy perception levels of nurses was examined and a significant relationship was found.

In the study, it was found that the total mean score of the psychological capital questionnaire was moderate, the self-efficacy dimension had the highest mean score and the optimism dimension had the lowest mean score. It is thought that factors such as nurses' lack of a healthy working environment, intense and irregular working hours, intense demands of the cared individuals, and differences in job demands affect the psychological capital levels of nurses. In studies conducted in different sectors, such as Cakmak and Arabaci's (2017) study conducted with teachers, it has been seen that psychological capital levels are high. In the literature, it is emphasized that individuals with high self-efficacy levels will have high levels of success and subjective well-being. It is stated that individuals who are aware of their abilities prefer to choose and overcome challenging tasks instead of avoiding risks (Tosten and Ozgan, 2017). In addition, it is stated that self-efficacy has a positive and significant relationship with motivation, general performance level (Bandura and Locke, 2003), and various practices in the workplace (Luthans et al., 2007b). It is stated that optimism, which is a component of psychological capital, is important for psycho-social harmony and well-being (Chen, Niu, Zhang, Fan, Tian and Zhou, 2016).

The reason for the low level of optimism in this study compared to the other dimensions is thought to be the low number of nurses in the hospital at the time of the research when the nurses were worried about the current working conditions and the future, which may have reflected negatively on their optimism dimension. Nurses are one of the largest groups providing health care. Therefore, psychological capital that predicts goal achievement and performance emphasizes one's positive evaluation of working conditions, and the possibility of success based on motivated effort and perseverance is important for organizations. Nurses, who have a busy work environment, should have



high levels of optimism to provide effective and efficient patient care. In addition, providing such an environment plays an important role in creating a positive psychological atmosphere for nurses.

In this study, it was found that the mean score of the organizational democracy scale was below the moderate level. In their study on healthcare professionals, Geckil et al. (2017) reported that the total mean score of the ODS is low, and the lowest mean score is the accountability sub-dimension. This result may be because the hospital where the research was conducted is a public university hospital, where the decisions for most of the practices are taken within the framework of legal regulations, the nurses do not have much voice in the decisions taken, there are a limited number of managerial positions and insufficient level of visibility in the team. Nurses' participation in the decision-making process in their organizations and criticizing wrong decisions can lead to organizational communication and information sharing, making them feel happier and more competent. The high level of organizational communication and information sharing reduces the unproductive behaviors of the employees resulting in an increase in productivity. According to the results of this study, nurses may think that they cannot participate in the decisions of the organization they are in and that they do not have an open and transparent management approach.

In this study, it was revealed that there is a highly significant relationship between nurses' organizational democracy levels and the psychological capital questionnaire and its sub-dimensions. Democratic workplaces enter a dynamic process aimed at developing employees' abilities and thus improving employee satisfaction and performance (Han and Garg, 2018). Han and Garg (2018) stated in a qualitative study that psychological capital and organizational democracy can illuminate the "big picture" of an efficient, optimistic, determined, and resilient organization. Also, it is emphasized that with psychological capital and organizational democracy, employees are exposed to more positive feelings and behaviors in the workplace, perceive more harmony between themselves and their job, experience more appreciation and satisfaction, experience strong feelings of pride, direction, and purpose in a more innovative and alive working environment. In a study by Geckil and Kocyigit (2017), a significant relationship was found between the perception of organizational democracy and psychological capital. Geckil et al. (2016) showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between psychological capital and perception of organizational democracy in a study they conducted with physicians and nurses. They determined that there is a relationship between psychological capital with all its dimensions and the "Participation Criticism, Transparency and Accountability" dimensions of organizational democracy. In a study conducted by Pircher Verdorfer and Weber (2016), it has been reported that employees working in democratic organizations scored higher in moral development than those working in traditional organizations. The fact that nurses participate in the decision-making process in their organizations and can easily criticize the wrong decisions makes the employees feel happier and more competent and leads to correct communication and information sharing in organizations resulting in an increase in the productivity levels of nurses.

When employees perceive democracy in the workplace, they connect with higher resources or personal strengths and perform better. Thus, it is suggested that while the self-respect and self-esteem of the employees increase in democratic organizations, they will experience their work purposefully (Hatcher, 2007). In this study, it was seen that nurses' psychological capital affected organizational democracy significantly and



positively. Creating democratic organizations will increase psychological capital, as it will improve expressiveness, determination, and competence among nurses (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). According to the results of the study, practices that will increase the psychological capital of nurses can also increase the perception of democracy in the organization. Psychological capital is defined as an individual's positive psychological development status (Luthans et al., 2007a, 2007b). Nurses who are psychologically developed can better perceive the current situation and their environment. In addition, their awareness level is high. Nurses with high psychological capital may put an effort to participate in organizational decisions concerning themselves. In addition, with their self-efficacy, they are not only accountable for their duties in the hospital but they also show an effort for the accountability of other employees and managers in the hospital. With their high resilience (and optimism, etc.), they can demand equality and justice in the hospital, participation and criticism, transparency, and accountability. On the other hand, they can better realize the existence, absence, and inadequacy of the existing organizational democracy.

This study contributes to the literature by pointing out the need to create a democratic working environment. In addition, it offers important findings to nurses and human resources practitioners to improve their perceptions of organizational democracy by supporting the psychological strength of their employees. It is stated that employees with a high level of psychological capital can develop and grow. The idea of participation assumes that employees are individuals with free will and unique growth potential who voluntarily take action with other colleagues for the common benefit. However, managers should be careful not to consider certain characteristics or capacities of employees as organizational resources when there is a risk of objectifying people.

Manager nurses should strengthen the participating behavior of the employees, support nurses for their personal development, offer an opportunity to tolerate the past, appreciate the present, and seek the future. In addition, strategies should be developed to recognize, appreciate and create self-awareness of personal resources.

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