

## Development of a new construct of employee well-being: A qualitative study

Çalışan mutluluğuna ilişkin yeni bir yapının geliştirilmesi: Nitel bir çalışma

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### Abstract

There is a growing interest for positive psychology at organizational management. Companies have increasingly been valuing the well-being of their employees, and seeking the impact to their work performance. Nonetheless, present models are limited in explaining employee well-being and in predicting performance; therefore a broader, multi-dimensional model is needed. This study presents the qualitative part of a larger research analysis, proposing a new and multi-dimensional well-being construct to explain employee well-being and to predict individual work performance. Through a series of literature review and focus group research analysis, it has determined 20 out of 38 positive psychology and work-related elements to predict performance. These elements set the ground for a future quantitative research phase, measuring the mediating effect of employee's well-being on the human resources practices and work performance relationship. Based on extensive body of research on theory of well-being, first major contribution of this study is the proposal of a new well-being construct to predict employees' performance. Second, it offers the possibility to determine the significance of HR practices on employees' well-being and performance. Results, future research and implications have been discussed.

**Keywords:** Employee well-being, multi-dimensional construct, performance, construct development

### Özet

Pozitif psikoloji örgütsel yönetim alanında gün geçtikçe daha çok yer almaya başlayan bir yaklaşımdır. Kurumlar, çalışan mutluluğuna giderek daha çok değer vermekte ve performanslarını anlamaya çalışmaktadırlar. Ancak, varolan modeller çalışan mutluluğunu ve performansını açıklamada eksik kalmakta ve daha geniş kapsamlı, çok boyutlu bir kavrama ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu çalışma, geniş kapsamlı ve çok boyutlu yeni bir çalışan mutluluğu kavramını nitel bir araştırma ile sunmaktadır. Literatür taraması ve odak grup çalışmaları sonucunda, oluşturulan pozitif psikoloji ve iş-temelli 38 kavramdan 20'sinin performansı etkilemede geçerli olduğu bulunmuştur. Elde edilen boyutlar, insan kaynakları (İK) uygulamaları ile performans ilişkisinde ara değişken olarak çalışan mutluluğunun etkisini araştırarak nicel çalışmalara hizmet edecektir. Mutluluk teorileri üzerine geniş kapsamlı araştırmayı içeren bu çalışmanın en büyük katkısı, çalışan mutluluğunun performansa olan etkisindeki farklılığı açıklayarak, geniş kapsamlı, ve yeni bir mutluluk ölçeği ortaya atmak olacaktır. Diğer bir katkısı ise, İK uygulamalarının çalışan mutluluğu ve performansa etkisini vurgulamada işverenlere ve uzmanlara kolaylık/imkan sağlamasıdır. Sonuçlar ve araştırma önerileri tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çalışan mutluluğu, çok boyutlu yapı, performans, kavram geliştirme

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## Introduction

Organizations pursue to deliver maximum efficiency and outcome from the processes of work and management. With the human relations movement and the growing importance of individuals at workforce (Wren, & Bedeian, 2009), human beings have become valuable resources to accomplish the organizational objectives, the talent and knowledge providers (Dekas et al., 2013). Taking employees as valuable resource for competitive advantage (Kor & Mahoney, 2004), human resource management (HRM) practices have become essential for organizations. Employers increasingly paid more attention to various HR practices to ensure productive and efficient outcomes (Mitchell, Obeidat, & Bray, 2013). These were a set of integrated activities involving selection, recruitment, performance appraisal, reward and compensation, and career management (Beltran-Martin & Roca-Puig, 2013; Kurt, 2008; Abstein et al., 2014), to ensure employee effectiveness and efficiency in production, individual and organizational goal achievement. Numerous studies indicate the positive relation between effective HRM practices and employee and organizational performance (Taris & Schaufeli, 2015; Van de Voorde et al, 2012; Vanhala & Tuomi, 2006).

With the human relation movements –upon the outstanding findings of the Hawthorne Studies in 1920s (Wren & Bedeian, 2009), organizational psychology, organizational behavior, and positive psychology have gained tremendous importance in management (Wren & Bedeian, 2009). Hawthorne Studies were a series of experiments for determining the effects of environmental conditions – illumination, heat, supervision, workplace facilities, etc. on workers’ performance. Despite inconvenient conditions, employees tended to work harder and produced better. Employees’ engagement, motivation, satisfaction, and well-being have gained focus of interest, yielding organizations providing instrumental and social support (Brummelhuis & Van Der Lippe, 2010; Fleetwood, 2007; Aycan & Eskin, 2005), and positivity fostering interventions (Tan, 2014).

Literature indicates the relationship between HR practices and employee well-being, but it is not possible to state a conclusive positive relation (Applebaum, 2002). This may be so, since HRM practices have not been designed to promote well-being, but primarily to ensure performance. Various concepts are analyzed in relation to performance; using job satisfaction, life satisfaction, subjective well-being (Diener, 2000), physical, emotional and social well-being (Van de Voorde et al, 2012; Sirca, Babnik, & Breznik, 2013), emotional exhaustion, burnout. Numerous empirical studies relate positive psychology (Froman, 2010), wellbeing (Diener, 2000), and work-life balance to organizational performance; and assert that effective HR practices generate positivity in employees, as well as impact on their performance (Van de Voorde et al, 2012).

One of the drives to initiate this research is the need for a multi-dimensional model in measuring well-being at corporate context. A systematic measure to determine employees’ well-being, and its impact to performance is missing. Individuals are complex beings and have various aspects affecting their quality of life. A broader concept involving multifaceted construct is necessary in determining their well-being; such model that would predict which aspect/s most relate to employee performance (Taris & Schaufeli, 2015).

Purpose of the study, based on happy-productive worker hypothesis (Wright et al., 2007; Taris & Schreurs, 2009), is to propose a new multi-dimensional construct, encompassing broader aspects of individuals’ life (Taris & Schaufeli, 2015), to measure employees’ well-being, as well as predict individual work performance.

## Method

The study introduces the qualitative research procedure and results of a larger body of research, in attempt to developing a new multi-dimensional construct of employee well-being. As part of qualitative research process, the study followed several steps for construct development. First, a series of extensive literature review on well-being, research on best practices in creating happiness at work, and interviews with professionals on their perception of employee well-being took place. Researcher then collected elements to comprise the proposed construct. As a result of a series of focus group interview sessions, the elements predicting employee performance have been determined.

*Employee Well-Being* Well-being in general and as relational to work context –i.e. domain specific, is analyzed via various constructs, showing variations from context-free to domain-specific, unidimensional (affective based) to multidimensional, and from data driven to theory based (Taris & Schaufeli, 2015). Present study is proposing a new, theory-based, multidimensional, and domain-specific employee well-being model upon analysis of the following constructs of well-being: (1) *subjective well-being* (SWB; Diener, 2009), (2) *psychological well-being* (PWB; Ryff, 1989), (3) *the new theory of well-being* (PERMA; Seligman, 2002), (4) *flourishing* (Huppert & So, 2013), (5) *integrated functioning* (Warr, 1994), (6) *occupational well-being* (van Horn et al., 2004), and (7) *employee well-being* (EWB; Zheng et al. 2015).

*Subjective Well-Being* (Diener, 2000) is a unidimensional, data driven, and context-free construct, often labeled as happiness within hedonic sense, refers to a good life. It is a subjective cognitive judgment, which depends on individual's experience, relies on both positive and negative measures, and it has a global assessment of life (Diener, 2000, 2009). Diener (2009) explains SWB as “the degree to which individual judges the overall quality of own life as a whole”; and states it as “how well the person likes the life s/he leads”. It is the of appraising life events, circumstances, and own self, with pleasant or unpleasant emotional reactions (Diener, 2009). So, Diener (2000) introduces SWB concept with two components: life satisfaction –as cognitive judgment, and happiness –as feelings or affect.

*Psychological Well-Being* (Ryff, 1989) is a multidimensional, theory-based, and context-free construct describing well-being with broad view perspective (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). It involves two broad dimensions on well-being: emotional well-being, referring to the three components of SWB; and positive functioning, referring to psychological and social dimensions of well-being. Psychological well-being refers to achievement of full psychological potential, and social well-being refers to positive states and functioning within social community (Carr, 2011). Ryff (1989) argues that the three-component model of SWB (i.e. positive emotions, negative emotions and life satisfaction) is limited in describing well-being, positing that it defines person's emotional well-being (Ryff, 1989). Ryff (1989), with a view beyond happiness, conceptualizes well-being as positive functioning, personal strength, mental health and growth as influential dimensions (Baumgardner & Crothers, 2010, p.29). Integrating various theories (i.e. mental health, clinical, and life span development) and operationalizing their theory-guided dimensions, Ryff (1989) proposes the six dimensions of psychological well-being, described as central to self-actualizers: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

The *New Theory of Well-Being* (Seligman, 2011) is a multidimensional, theory based, and context-free model, elaborated from Authentic Happiness Theory, based on positive psychology (Seligman, 2002). The model is based on three properties (Seligman, 2011): each element contributes to well-being; people pursue each for its own sake -i.e. for its intrinsically motivating feature (Deci and

Ryan, 1985), and each has exclusivity, that is defined and measured independently from the others (p.16). Seligman (2011) differentiates well-being theory from happiness –life satisfaction, and proposes a model (PERMA) comprised of five elements: positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and purpose, and achievement.

*Flourishing* (Huppert & So, 2013) is a multidimensional, theory based, and context-free model that takes its name from positive psychology; defined as “the experience of life going well; a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively; synonymous with high level of mental well-being” (Huppert & So, 2013). It is based on theories and conceptualizations of positive functioning and mental health –i.e. Jahoda’s positive functioning (1958); Ryff’s psychological well-being (1989); Diener’s subjective well-being (2000); Ryan & Deci’s self-determination theory (2000a); and Seligman’s PERMA(2011). Huppert and So (2013) have found the common view that well-being is multidimensional, “therefore a more systematic approach is needed” (p. 840). Huppert and So (2013) have operationalized flourishing by combining ten positive features: competence, emotional stability, meaning, optimism, resilience, positive emotion, positive relationships, self-esteem, and vitality.

*Integrated Functioning* (Warr, 1994) is a multidimensional, theory based, and domain specific model that encompasses four dimensions specified for functioning at work: Warr (1994) operationalizes the construct with affective well-being, aspiration, autonomy, and competence. *Affective well-being* relates to intensity of moods; *aspiration* relates to interest and engagement; *autonomy* relates to ability to take stand and act for own opinion; and *competence* relates to self-efficacy (of Bandura, 1997). According to Taris and Schaufeli (2015), Warr’s (1994) model has an integrated approach in conceptualizing well-being, where it is both a four-dimension construct, and a single dimension encompassing its dimensions.

*Occupational Well-Being* (van Horn et al., 2004) is a multidimensional, theory based, and domain specific model distinguishing well-being with affective, professional, social, cognitive, and psychosomatic well-being. Van Horn and colleagues (2004) adopt Warr’s (1994) model within their first two dimensions, where *affective well-being* relates to job satisfaction, job commitment, and emotional fatigue; *professional well-being* relates to autonomy, aspiration and competence; *social well-being* relates to general quality of social functioning at work; *cognitive well-being* relates to acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities; and *psychosomatic well-being* relates to health symptoms.

*Employee Well-Being* (Zheng et al., 2015) is most recent known research on well-being at work. It is a three-component, theory based, and domain specific model, involving job satisfaction and work-related affect (workplace well-being –WWB); general quality of life and affect status (subjective well-being –SWB); and Ryff’s (1989) six dimensions of psychological well-being (PWB).

### **Proposed New Construct for Employee Well-Being and Research Questions**

To authors’ view, present models of well-being are limited in explaining employee well-being and in predicting performance; therefore a broader, multi-dimensional model is needed. Measures of well-being at work have mainly been constructed through job satisfaction, in combination with various job domains (Spector, 1997), or a multiple measure approach has been adopted, evaluating the positive and negative affect and cognitive judgment over one’s job satisfaction (Cotton & Hart, 2003). Despite emergence of a broad view perspective, encompassing work and non-work-related measures (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009), prior research on employee well-being is based on competitive rather than complementary approach (Zheng et al., 2015). Hence, there is a need for a multidimensional construct encompassing employees’ happiness and potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001), focusing on both hedonic and

eudaimonic well-being: quality of life, psychological status at work (Siegrist et al., 2006); career success and satisfaction (Carlson et al., 2014; DiRenzo, 2010), overall well-being and family relations (Vanhala & Tuomi, 2006); individual and situational factors (Illies et al., 2007); positive emotions as well as negative emotions in the workplace (Diener, 2009).

Based on the various theories of well-being, this study proposes a new multidimensional construct for measuring employee well-being. It adopts Luthans, Avolio, Avey, and Norman's (2007) suggestion in proposing a new construct: grounded in theory and research, empirically distinct, and practical importance for scholars and practitioners. Applying Seligman's (2011) inclusion criteria (each element contributing to well-being, based on intrinsic motivation, and exclusive of its own) the study has collected positive psychology and work-related elements to explain employee well-being, and predict work performance. 38 elements have been theoretically analyzed under 8 dimensions – satisfaction, work-life balance, engagement, career success, authentic functioning, emotional intelligence, psychological capital, and other elements (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** *Proposed 38 elements to explain employee well-being*

Satisfaction	Work-life Balance	Engagement	Career Success	Authentic Functioning	Emotional Intelligence	Psychological Capital	Other Elements
Life Satisfaction	Work-life Balance	Work Engagement	Career Satisfaction	Participation	Self-awareness	Self-efficacy	Acceptance
Emotional Health	Flexible Working	Flow	Growth and Advancement	Authenticity	Self-management	Resilience	Response Flexibility
Family Satisfaction	Segmentation & Integration	Mindfulness	Goal Attainment	Autonomy	Motivation	Optimism	Gratitude
Job Satisfaction	Work-Life Enrichment		Challenge		Empathy	Hope	Compassion
Financial Satisfaction			Competence		Social-awareness		Vitality
Physical Health			Meaning and Purpose		Social Relationships		
			Work-discipline				

The proposed elements to explain and contribute employees' well-being, have been conceptually analyzed as antecedents or in relation to well-being at work, as well as individual work performance: *life satisfaction* (Diener, 2009), *family satisfaction* (Carlson et al., 2014), *job satisfaction* (Shein & Chen, 2011), *financial satisfaction* (Senik, 2014; Diener & Oishi, 2000; Diener et al., 1993), *emotional health* (Diener, 2000), *physical health* (Pettit et al., 2011), *work-life balance* (Gröpel & Kuhl, 2009), *work-family enrichment* (Tang, Siu & Cheung, 2014; Jaga, Bagraim & Williams, 2013), *flexible working* (Soo, 2009; Jang, 2009); *work engagement* (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), *flow* (Jinmoo et al, 2010), *mindfulness* (Andrews, Kacmar & Kacmar, 2014; Michel, Bosch & Rexroth, 2014; Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2011; Brown & Ryan, 2003), *career success* (Carlson et al., 2014), *career satisfaction* (DiRenzo, 2010; Vatansever, 2008), *challenge and competence* (Ryan & Deci, 2000b), *meaning and purpose* (Arnold et al., 2007), *work discipline* (Britt et al., 2007), *participation in decision making* (Spector, 1986), *authentic behavior* (Kernis, 2003), *autonomy* (Van den Broeck et al.,

2010), *emotional intelligence* (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Wang & Kong, 2014; Yildirim, 2007), *psychological capital* (Luthans et al., 2007; Yuossef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015), *acceptance* (Hayes et al., 2006; North et al., 2014), *response flexibility* (Siegel, 2013), *gratitude* (Wood et al., 2009), *compassion* (2012; Hur et al., 2016), and *vitality* (Hennekam, 2016).

In light of research and findings, present study has sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Does the new well-being construct, with its elements, explain employee well-being?
2. Does the new well-being construct, with its elements, predict employee performance?

### **Participants**

Participants comprised of 25 professionals working in various fields: sales employees in trading and technology, academicians at university, employees and directors in software programming, and professionals in finance, finance equity, education, actuary, energy, and audit services; 4 female, and 21 male, age ranging from 25 to 52 (average 35,9); and 17 married, and 8 single. Member selection was on the basis of ensuring a sector variety, age range from X to Y generation, years of experience, and gender balance.

### **Procedure**

In order to identify the elements predicting work performance, a qualitative research process covering focus group interviews and results analysis took place between February-April, 2015, in Istanbul, Turkey. Focus group research, termed as “focused interviews” or “group depth interviews” (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990), are structured discussion sessions, moderated towards finding a consensus (Krueger, 1988). They are usually comprised of 5-10 members to interact on a specific topic, with the purpose of obtaining people’s beliefs and understandings.

Through author’s moderation, members were invited to read the elements and definitions, and were asked to discuss on each element. They were addressed with the question: “In what extent these elements would or might predict your work performance?” The aim, at this phase, did not involve evaluating work performance, but identifying the elements that are most likely to predict performance. Upon discussion over each element, members rated the degree of impact each element may possibly have on their work performance, using a quantifiable scale, ranging from 1-does not effect at all; 2-effects a little; 3-neither effects nor doesn’t; 4-effects; to 5-effects a lot. An important emphasis, that, results have been analyzed based on discussions and not the quantifiable scale.

### **Results and Discussion**

Based on Krueger (1988)’s suggested analysis, the focus group research delivered mainly descriptive and interpretation level results. During the 2-hour focus group sessions, experts discussed the degree of each element in predicting their work performance. Out of 38, 20 elements have been stated as strongly and significantly predicting performance, where the other elements have been regarded as weak or non-significant. In light of the discussion results, present study suggests the following seven dimensions to explain employee well-being: (1) satisfaction, (2) work-life balance, (3) engagement, (4) career success, (5) authentic functioning, (6) emotional intelligence, and (7) psychological capital (see

Table 2). Results over identified elements have been discussed in brief with their relevance and support of prior literature findings.

**Table 2.** *Final 20 elements explaining employee well-being*

Satisfaction	Work-life Balance	Engagement	Career Success	Authentic Functioning	Emotional Intelligence	Psychological Capital
Life Satisfaction	Work-life Balance	Work Engagement	Career Satisfaction	Autonomy & Participation	Self-management	Self-efficacy
Emotional Health		Flow	Meaning and Purpose		Self-relationships	Resilience
Family Satisfaction		Mindfulness	Work-discipline			Optimism
Job Satisfaction						Hope
Financial Satisfaction						
Physical Health						

*Satisfaction:* All six proposed elements under this domain have been regarded as predictor to performance. Life satisfaction, a global judgment over quality of life (Diener, 2009), has been considered a road perspective encompassing all domains of life, as inseparable component in predicting performance. Domain specific components, as family satisfaction and job satisfaction, have been stated as driving forces to performance. Studies indicate the strong correlation between life satisfaction and job satisfaction (Judge & Watanabe, 1993; Spector, 1997), and perceived quality of work and family life (Indumathi & Selvan, 2014) in relation to quality of work life. Previous studies found the positive relation of these components with individual performance (Azril et al., 2010; Bouckennooghe et al., 2013).

Despite controversial perspectives in the money-happiness-performance relation (Senic, 2014; Diener & Oishi 2000; Diener et al., 1993), studies support the contribution of having ‘enough’ money to well-being and work performance (Pryce-Jones, 2010; Kim & Garman, 2004). Experts’ perspective, parallel to literature findings, financial satisfaction is enabler and comfort zone every person instrumentally wants to reach. Pryce-Jones (2010) findings reveal that having enough money provides the opportunity to make choices in what one does; whereas absence results with pressure (p. 72). Kim and Garman (2003; 2004) findings show that financial pressure and worry over financial situation have negative effect on work performance, resulting with low motivation for work tasks, and more allocation of work time to personal financial matters (p. 72).

Physical and emotional health (positive and negative emotions) has been attributed as pivotal, with the exception that absence rather than presence of physical and emotional health had stronger importance. In other words, experts viewed that having positive emotions and being physically healthy may be taken for granted, where their influence might be greater in case of their absence. Studies support these findings, that positive emotions found to effect insurance sales people’s performance positively (Lin et al., 2014), and that ill-health (somatic complaints, hypertension, headaches, gastrointestinal problems, respiratory infections, chronic pain, etc.) found to be associated with

reduction of performance (Ford et al., 2011).

*Work-Life Balance:* Work-life balance has been perceived as an important determinant to predict performance; stating that positive perception over own balance between work and non-work would contribute to a better performance. Employees perceive the positive balance as available resources and tend to generate improved performance in the same or another life domain (Shein & Chen, 2011). The preference of living an integrated or separated life within work and non-work domains has been regarded as personal preference and strategy to maintain a positive balance; adding that enrichment available in work and family life would contribute to a positive work-life balance, and contribute their performance. Work-life enrichment study findings show the positive and negative facilitation of balance or imbalance perception over work performance (Carlson et al., 2009), the positive impact of positive resources (work enriching family life, or vice versa) and the positive affect (derived from the enrichment) on work performance (Shein & Chen, 2011).

*Engagement:* The level of engagement in one's activities has been stated to potentially have great impact on their performance level. The concepts work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; 1978; 1997), and mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 1993; 2003; Brown & Ryan, 2003) have been perceived as highly interrelated. Indeed, theoretical research shows that these three concepts have numerous common qualities: they involve having a present moment experience, being actively engaged in work tasks with attention and awareness, and with enthusiastic-intrinsic-energetic and accepting attitude (Reid, 2011); letting go the worrying about self, while attention is on present moment (Jackson, 2015).

Focus group findings reveal that these concepts have driving force to work performance. They distinguished work engagement and flow as predictor to efficient performance, bringing high performance results through absorption in work task and work enjoyment; while mindfulness as predictor to effective performance, delivering high quality of work results through active attention and awareness. Studies explain optimal experience and outcome at work with engagement and flow (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989), where active attention and awareness (mindfulness), sense of energy, absorption, and enthusiasm for work (work engagement), and a present moment experience with loss in sense of time-space (flow) lead employees to be more attentive to well-performing (Simbula & Guglielmi, 2013; Reb et al., 2015), to higher job satisfaction perception (Andrews, Kacmar & Kacmar, 2014), and less absence or intention to leave (Merill et al., 2013). Awareness for example significantly positively relates with task performance (Reb et al., 2015), enjoyment and absorption in work activities contribute to learning and academic performance (Demerouti et al. 2012), energy (vigor) and enthusiasm for work shows high health and performance behavior (Merril et al., 2013).

*Career Success:* When career related elements discussed, five elements have been identified to predict work performance: career satisfaction, growth and advancement, goal attainment, meaning and purpose, and work discipline. Theoretically they appear in two career constructs: career satisfaction (Greenhaus et al., 1990) and subjective career success (Shockley et al., 2016). The constructs are empirically correlated (Hennekam, 2016), and positively related to work performance (Hennekam, 2016; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015). Studies show that career satisfaction (satisfaction with career achievements, progress in meeting career goals for advancement, and development of new skills) (Greenhaus et al., 1990) is positively related with job satisfaction and performance (Karatepe, 2012); and subjective career success (competence, meaning, work quality) is positively related to job performance (Ölçer, 2015; Britt et al., 2006).

Meaning and purpose, within work-as-meaning model (Steger & Dik, 2010) is one of the

indicators to subjective perception of career success, (Shockley et al., 2016), referring to people giving greater value to having positive meaning in work, making meaningful work, and contributing to a greater good (Steger & Dik, 2010). In accord with empirical findings (Shockley et al., 2016; Ölçer, 2015; Greasley et al., 2005), participants suggest that the presence of a positive perception over the essence of the work tasks and being aware of the big picture considerably contributing to work performance. In case of absence of meaning in work –such as positive perception and awareness of the big picture is missing, experts suggested ‘work discipline’ as an effective element to foster performance. Experts identified work discipline as a sense of job ownership and responsibility towards the work and task; and as an auto-control mode that would dominate their willingness to work for good performance. It conceptually appears and is operationalized as work quality (Shockley et al., 2016), personal engagement (Kahn, 1990), and self-engagement at work (Britt et al., 2007). This strong sense of personal responsibility for own performance and commitment to a superior performance (Britt et al., 2007) is found to be a significant predictor of rated performance (Britt et al., 2006).

*Authentic functioning:* Autonomy and participation in decision-making were regarded as determining factors to high performance. Participants identified autonomy as an underlying factor that might lead them to taking initiative on how the work is done; and explained as ‘auto-control’ on way of doing one’s work. These perceptions fit with scholars’ conceptualization –“decision latitude and control over skills used at work” (Karasek, 1979); and “discretion in scheduling the work and in determining the procedure to be used in carrying it out” (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Studies show that job autonomy –discretion over how to perform their job, has positive effect on both well-being and work related outcomes. Thompson and Prottas (2005) found autonomy creating more pleasant attitude towards job, less intention to leave, and less job related stress; Humphrey and friends (2007) found positive relation to job responsibility, motivation, job involvement and work performance; and Batt and Colvin (2011) found lack of autonomy as possible reason to higher quits, dismissals, and lower customer service quality.

Participation in decision-making, perceived as means for autonomous behavior, was regarded as important contributor to performance. It is viewed as opportunity to initiate and have the freedom to act autonomous. This view, conceptualized as voice and choice: the opportunity to express opinion or interest to decision-making, and the degree of influence on the decisions made (Witt et al., 2000). It is found positively related to productivity and job satisfaction (Scott-Ladd & Chan, 2004), transparency in communication, and teamwork (Daniels & Bailey, 1999), performance efficiency (Wang, 2003), organizational commitment (Appelbaum et al., 2000), and enthusiasm for producing efficient work outcomes (Bakan & Büyükbeşe, 2008).

Authentic functioning and behavior is positively related with positive employee outcomes –work engagement, work role performance, and basic need satisfaction (Leroy et al., 2013; 2015). Participants identified authenticity as naturally and freely exerting oneself, as own self. They view its presence as important means to performance, whereas its absence as potential cause to bad outcomes. Their identification, conceptualized by authentic behavior –“behavior in accord with one’s true self, values, preferences, needs” (Kernis, 2003), is found positively related with basic need satisfaction (Gardner et al., 2005) and work-related outcomes (Leroy et al., 2015). Research asserts that satisfaction of basic needs promotes authentic behavior, where employees authentically showing their true selves are more likely to feel resonance with their work-related behavior (Leroy et al., 2015).

*Emotional Intelligence:* Studies confirm the positive relation between emotional intelligence (Boyatzis & Goleman, 1996) and work-related outcomes (Devonish, 2016; Alfonso et al., 2016; Naqvi et al., 2016; Joseph & Newman, 2010). Present research revealed that only two of the emotional

intelligence components were viewed as directly related with performance: self-management and social relationships. Self-management, perceived as directly related to attitude and behavior, is regarded important in predicting performance, both at work and non-work domains. Social relationships, specifically with co-workers, supervisor, and subordinates were assumed as highly related to performance, as well as in creating positive work atmosphere. Some supporting research results show that self-management (or regulating emotions) and social relationships (managing relationships) were the only significant predictor to job performance and career success (merit pay) (Branscum et al., 2016), and significant predictor to life satisfaction, happiness, and perceived stress (Ruiz-Aranda et al., 2014).

*Psychological Capital (PsyCap)*: Psychological capital is associated with positive employee outcomes –positivity, well-being, and performance (Luthans et al., 2013; Luthans et al., 2007; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015); performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Avey et al., 2010). Participants' view over components of PsyCap reveals that, resilience –specifically important at managerial positions, and self-efficacy were assumed as a guide towards success at challenging times and for bouncing back. They were associated with self-confidence, challenge, growth and advancement. Optimism and hope were viewed as predictor to performance, on the basis of a realistic one; adding that absence of hope would negatively affect performance. Luthans and friends' (2007) study, analyzing components independently, indicate that self-efficacy and hope have been highest to predict work performance of manufacturing workers and insurance service employees.

### **Future Research and Limitations**

This paper has presented the procedure and results of a qualitative research analysis. The research activities, identified well-being elements to predict individual work performance, via extensive analysis of literature and focus group interviews (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990; Krueger, 1988). As future steps of research, the study will be testing the mediating effect of the new employee well-being construct in the HR practices and individual work performance relationship. For a quantitative analysis, the research will be using statistically valid and reliable measurement instrument for each element.

This study has a few limitations, to be taken into consideration, and may be further extended in future research. Firstly, the study scope has been limited within Istanbul region. In terms of generalizability to the Turkish work context, focus group interviews and discussions may be extended to other industrial regions around Turkey. Second, the proposed construct may be a potential for international generalizability. Such multi-dimensional measurement tool, which is particularly relational to work performance, may be a useful one in the international context. Hence, the study may be considered for further research in other countries and cultures as well. Third, due to limitation in time and scope, the focus group discussions have involved white-collar professionals only. Looking from an organizational management perspective, HRM practices today involve both white and the blue-collar employees. Hence, carrying out further research within homogeneous and heterogeneous group formation, focusing on blue-collar employees may be worthwhile for ensuring reliability and validity of such construct. As the last point of limitation may be the number of focus group sessions. Although focus group interview procedures state that groups of 5 to 10 members, with total of 5 sessions may be adequate for obtaining view and understanding of targeted group (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990; Krueger, 1988), a higher number of discussion sessions, may deliver broadened and enriched perception and view.

### **Theoretical Implications**

There is a growing emphasis in measurement of well-being both in general and at work context. The body of literature, studying aspects of well-being has increased, where a multi-dimensional perspective has taken charge, both in positive and organizational psychology (Seligman, 2011; Huppert & So, 2013; Zheng et al., 2015). This study, proposes a construct of well-being, with a broad view, whose elements are considered to positively predict work performance. It primarily bases its research on the Happy-Productive Worker Hypothesis (Lucas & Diener, 2003) and numerous other theories.

Most constructs of well-being in positive psychology are grounded on the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000a) and the basic psychological needs –autonomy, competence and relatedness (Seligman, 2011; Van Horn, et al., 2004; Warr, 1994; Ryff, 1989). Well-being is majorly analyzed in relation to performance within Broaden-and-Build Theory (Fredrickson, 2001; 2004). The theory states that “positive emotions will ‘broaden’ the momentary thought-action repertoire by expanding the potential actions and thoughts to come to mind, that assists to ‘building’ physical, psychological, intellectual and social resources” (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005), which will lead to increase in perceived well-being (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002).

When employees’ well-being is placed as focal point, these resources are key to maintaining well-being. In order to maintain a well-being perspective, employees need to be aware of the elements contributing to their well-being and performance. Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests that, “individuals seek to attain and protect their resources, that buffer against work-related strain and stress; where resources depleted, there is a higher tendency to appraise elements of the environment as stressful” (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2001). Employees will have higher tendency to appraise elements of the environment as positive, when they hold a broad and integrated awareness over their well-being, especially comprised of enriching elements as resources to contribute their well-being. Such positive appraisal would also result with positive perception over HR practices.

When employees’ performance is placed as focal point, employees will perform at best with the available resources. Effort-Recovery Theory (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) maintains that, individuals pay great amount of effort to keep their level of well-being to perform at their best. Trying to expand effort at work has short and long term costs –fatigue, stress, negative emotions; as well as low high levels of un-well-being, burnout, depression. These outcomes result with employees stopping to keep performance and delivering mediocre results (Taris & Schaufeli, 2015). On the other hand, Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) states that, “every individual tries to maximize his wins”, and that employees with positive perception and attitude on HRM activities reciprocate with performance, commitment, satisfaction and trust (Whitener, 2001, in Van de Voorde et al., 2012).

When organizational management is placed as focal point, employers get into the dilemma of outcomes: mutual gains versus conflicting outcomes (Peccei, 2004). Mutual gains perspective argues that HRM may have positive affect on both employee well-being and performance; while conflicting outcomes perspective asserts that HRM needs to choose between the distinctive goals, for a competitive advantage. Such a trade-off between employees’ well-being and performance may be eliminated, yielding a win-win, through employees’ awareness of the particular elements contributing to their well-being and performance.

From a theoretical point, the proposed construct may be unique, as it integrates various concepts and theories of well-being, both in general and work-focused (Ryff, 1989; Diener, 2000; Warr, 1994; van Horn et al., 2004; Seligman, 2011; Huppert & So, 2013; Zheng et al., 2015). Furthermore, it attempts to integrate new concepts –such as mindfulness, work discipline, authentic behavior,

emotional intelligence, compassion, gratitude, etc., in addition to present ones.

### **Managerial Implications**

“What you do not measure, you cannot manage” is an old management motto that is valid for all times. Organizations, within HRM, appraise the impact and effectiveness of their practices, as well as regularly measure employees’ attitude in order to retain and engage their best talent. Recent interest in attracting the ‘happy talent’ and getting enlisted in “best workplace”, organizations have given greater importance on employees’ satisfaction, engagement, and well-being. However, available models are limited in explaining employees’ well-being and in predicting their work performance (Taris & Schaufeli, 2015).

From a management perspective, the proposed construct involves positive psychology and work-related elements that explain well-being and predict performance, that is believed to have contributions to practitioners. First, it may be an effective tool for HRM in ‘appraising’ well-being, as well as in ‘managing’ well-being. Second, addressing Taris and Schaufeli’s (2015) suggestion, it may be a model for HR leaders and experts for determining employees’ current overall well-being, the aspects explaining their well-being, and the particular elements that significantly predict their individual work performance. Third, the model may facilitate HRM for effective well-being and performance interventions, through determining the significant aspects so as to include and the non-significant aspects so as to exclude in employee’s plan. Such model, if integrated within performance management and succession planning program, may facilitate to a positive HRM and organizational management.

### **Conclusion**

HRM practices are primarily in action to promote performance. Lately, high-performance based companies have been implementing particular HR practices (Kurt, 2008; Gittell, 2005), focusing on employee motivation, engagement, positivity, and well-being (Tan, 2014; Bock, 2015). However, measuring models are limited in determining the impact of these practices, in explaining employees’ level of engagement and well-being, and in predicting their work performance. Hence, in attempt to propose a broad and multidimensional construct to explain well-being and predict performance, this study has determined 20 out of 38 well-being and work-related elements as significant predictor to individual work performance. Qualitative research results show seven dimensions, explaining employees’ well-being, significantly predict their work performance. These are satisfaction (life in general, family, job, financial, physical and emotional health), work-life balance, engagement (work engagement, flow, and mindfulness), career success (career satisfaction, meaning and purpose, and work discipline), emotional intelligence (self-management and social relationships), and psychological capital (hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy).

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