

**The mediating role of Generational difference on the relationship between
Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support
and the Wellbeing of South African National Defence Force members**

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DECLARATION

I, Babitsanang Annah Selepe, declare that this research thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology at the University of the Rhodes, Grahamstown. I certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree in any other university and that it is my original work. I declare that I have acknowledged all sources utilized by means of a complete list of references.

I, further declare that ethical clearance to conduct the research has been obtained from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Rhodes University Ethics Committee and from the 1-Military Ethical Committee. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the participating stakeholders.

I also declare that the study was carried out in strict accordance with the University of Rhodes Policy on Research Ethics and that I conducted the research with the highest integrity during all phases of the research process, taking into account the University of Rhodes's Policy on Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism. I, declare that the plagiarism total score is 18% which is an acceptable percentage according to Department of Psychology guidelines allowing only 20% of Turnitin similarity index. Single sources are less than 5% with all sources being 1% except one that is 4% which is still within acceptable range.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the loving memory of my late Aunt and Granny, Mohlakoditxi and Meeta a Hlabirwa Kgagara as well as my late father Elias Lekhuleng for their constant encouragement and most of all for believing in me. Their direction and insights were always invaluable “...*sadly missed along life's way, quietly remembered every day . . .*”

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing concern in understanding the contribution of generational difference (as a mediating variable) and factors that increase soldiers' well-being. This study aimed to determine the relationship between Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment and Organisational Support, and well-being. Additionally, it proposes the generational differences as a potential mediating factor among these variables. The study was guided by a positivist philosophy and quantitative research method was employed.

The sample for this research consisted of 777 members from both Internal deployed within borders of Free state and those going for external deployment at De-Brug. The results show most respondents were male (78.3%) and 21.7% female. Most respondents were categorised as Gen Y (between 1981 - 1996, 67.0%), followed by Gen X (1965 - 1980, 24.8%) and Gen Z (1997 - 2012, 8.2%). Most respondents were in the SA Army, followed by SAAF and SAMHS and the SA Navy.

Spearman's Correlation and ANOVA analyses were conducted to test the relationship between the variables. The results revealed significant relationships between the variables included in the empirical model. However, Well-being does not have a statistically significant correlation with the mediation variable, generation cohort. Similarly, generation cohorts (X, Y, Z) do not significantly correlate with the predictor variables, Perceived Organisational Support, Psychological Empowerment. However, there is a statistically significant small negative correlation between generation cohort (Age) and Psychological Capital. The multiple regression analysis exhibited a significant overall model fit, indicating that 30% of the variance in employee well-being was accounted for by the predictors.

Thus, this research implicates that the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) would benefit from developing a culture and adopting policies as well as programmes that prioritises psychological well-being above physical prowess. For this reason, the present study is regarded as offering a potentially valuable contribution to the existing body of research in the positive psychology and reveals practical implications and applications within the military context. The study recommends that combat readiness requires prioritising mental health above physical strength. Policymakers should consider psychological factors like psychological capital and psychological

empowerment. Training programmes should include Psychological Capital and cognitive resilience. There should also be further research on positive psychology and troops' well-being. These factors can help improve peacekeeping and combat force readiness. Understanding generational variations' mediating effect can inform resilience and training programmes. Military organisations should cultivate confident, capable, and educated leaders to improve military proficiency.

Keywords:

Psychological Capital; Psychological empowerment; Organisational support; Well-being; Generational Difference; South African National Defence Force, South Africa.

Abstract translated in Northern Sotho (Sepedi); the author's native language.

Go na le go tshwenyega mo go golago ka go kwešiša seabe sa phapano ya meloko (bjalo ka phetogo ya go tsena gare) le mabaka ao a oketšago bophelo bjo bobotse bja mašole. Thuto ye e be e ikemišeditše go laetša kamano magareng ga Motsemošate wa Saekoloji, Matlafatšo ya Saekoloji le Thekgo ya Mokgatlo, le bophelo bjo bobotse. Go tlaleletša, e šišinya dipapano tša meloko bjalo ka selo seo se ka bago gare ga diphetogo tše. Thuto e be e hlahlwa ke filosofi ya positivist gomme mokgwa wa nyakišišo ya boleng o ile wa šomišwa.

Sampole ya nyakišišo ye e be e na le maloko a 743 go tšwa go bobedi Internal ao a rometšwego ka gare ga mellwane ya Free state le ao a yago go romelwa ka ntle, balego kua De-Brug. Dipolelo di bontšha gore bontši bja ba arabetšego e be e le banna (78.3%) le 21.7% e le basadi. Bontši bja ba arabetšego ba ile ba arolwa ka magoro bjalo ka Gen Y (gare ga 1981 - 1996, 67.0%), gomme ya latelwa ke Gen X (1965 - 1980, 24.8%) le Gen Z (1997 - 2012, 8.2%). Bontši bja ba arabetšego ba be ba le ka go SA Army, gomme ba latelwa ke SAAF le SAMHS le SA Navy.

Ditshekatsheko tša Spearman's Correlation le ANOVA di dirilwe go leka kamano magareng ga diphetogo. Dipolelo di utollotše dikamano tše bohlokwa magareng ga diphetogo tše di akareditšwego mohlaleng wa dipihlelelo. Le ge go le bjalo, Bophelo bjo bobotse ga bo na tswalano le phetogo ya botsenagare, sehlopha sa moloko. Ka mo go swanago, dihlopha tša moloko (X, Y, Z) ga di sepelelane kudu le diphetogo tša go bolela e sa le pele, Thekgo ya Mokgatlo ye e lemogwago, Matlafatšo ya Saekoloji. Le ge go le bjalo, go na le tswalano ye nnyane ye mpe ye bohlokwa ya dipalopalo magareng ga sehlopha sa moloko (Mengwaga) le Motsemošate wa Saekoloji. Tshekatsheko ya go boela morago ga bontši e bontšhitše go swanela ga mohlala ka kakaretšo mo go bohlokwa, go laetša gore 30% ya phapano ya bophelo bjo bobotse bja bašomi e be e akaretšwe ke dipolelelopele.

Ka go realo, nyakišišo ye e laetša gore, Sešole sa Tšhireletšo ya Setšhaba sa Afrika Borwa (SANDF) se be se tla holega ka go hlabolla setšo le go amogela melawana gammogo le mananeo ao a etiša pele bophelo bjo bobotse bja monagano go feta bokgoni bja mmele. Ka lebaka le, nyakišišo ya bjale e tšewa bjalo ka yeo e fago seabe seo se ka bago bohlokwa go sehlopha se lego gona sa nyakišišo ka go thutotlhaloganyo

ye botse gomme e utolla ditlamorago tše di šomago le ditirišo ka gare ga seemo sa sešole.

Mantšu a bohlokwa: Motse-mošate wa Saekoloji; Matlafatšo ya monagano; Thekgo ya mokgatlo; Bophelo bjo bobotse; Phapano ya Meloko; Sesole sa Tshireletso ya Sechaba sa Afrika Borwa, Afrika Borwa.

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a synopsis of the entire study. A brief overview and definition of the role of generational difference on the relationship between Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support on the well-being of South African National Defence Force members has been shown through the background of this study. The problem that motivated the researcher to conduct this study is clearly stated in this chapter. The research objective and questions are posed as well on this section of the study and the contribution and value of this study is described. This chapter is a launching pad and map of everything that will occur as the study unfolds.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

With the end of Border War; the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War; as well as internal political and economic constraints; the South African state was forced to enter into a period of social, political and economic restructuring (Louw & Esterhuyse, 2014). The restructuring has led to a formation of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), the South African Defence Force (SADF) was combined with other statutory and non-statutory forces. The integration of the different forces altered the demographic profile of the military quite radical. The emergence of a new generational cohort coincided with profound historical, political, economic and social change, when the country transitioned from the oppressive apartheid regime to a democracy in 1994. This also had a bearing as far as the psychology of recipients of this paradigm shift was concerned. All those born into this new political dispensation have been coined the 'born free', or 'Mandela' generation (Hyler, 2013). According to Mattes (2012: 4), this generation is 'not only growing, but are increasingly comprised of young people who have spent some or all of their high school years exposed to a pro-democracy curriculum', with little memory of passes and segregated living. As a result, this research's burden is to investigate how generational difference plays a conciliating role between psychological capital, psychological empower empowerment and organisational support on the well-being of South African National Defence Forces members.

Research indicates that the core values of military culture are obedience, discipline, subordination to authority, cohesion, teamwork, and loyalty (Coker, 2007; Louw & Esterhuysen, 2014). This is in direct contrast to what millennials identify with. For example, Suleman and Nelson (2011) as well as Hyler (2013) argue that millennials (Generation Y) are risk-averse, and they do not prefer rigid, authoritative and conservative work environments, indicating that the military is not an ideal fit. Similarly, the challenge facing armed forces across the globe, and the SANDF too, is that the youth are more individualistic and motivated by self-centred work preferences (Louw & Esterhuysen, 2014). However, due to the nature of the military job, it is imperative that the military attracts members who are willing to make sacrifices to meet institutional goals. Given the above discussion, it was interesting to find out how different age groups experience wellbeing. The historical development in SANDF plays an important role in the psychology of soldiers.

Furthermore, with the SANDF becoming more involved in peace missions on the continent, the need to establish a highly skilled, professional, technologically advanced defence force that is able to handle a diverse and evolving set of challenges, became even more of a prerogative (Heineken, 2005; DOD, 2014). Van Dyk and George (2006) assert that SANDF officers must have skills, knowledge and attitude to develop human potential, to lead joint operations in Africa, to develop a vision for the country and the continent and to deal with the security challenges of the future on a strategic level, and to meet shifting mission demands. This means having a more flexible force that is able to deploy at short notice on expeditionary missions.

Military operations always entail stressors of various kinds for the troops involved. Historically, the extreme stressors of combat and all-out war have received the greatest attention. However, military operations in the post-Cold War era bring additional challenges and stressors. For one thing, as the number of peacekeeping, peace-making, peace enforcement, humanitarian, and other kinds of operations increase, while military organisations shrink in size with the shift to all-volunteer forces, units are deploying more frequently. Increased deployments entail other stressful changes in military units as well, such as an increased number (and intensity) of training exercises, planning sessions, and equipment inspections, all of which increase the workload and pace of operations (Castro & Adler, 1999).

Since the establishment of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in 1994, its utilisation has not been restricted to a passive role of peacekeeping; it also escalated to peace enforcement where SANDF soldiers were actively engaged in combat (Dodd, *et al.*, 2020). For example, the battle of Bangui in March 2013, South African soldiers engaged in battle with rebel forces while they were in fact deployed on a mission for training and renovation of military infrastructure in the CAR (Mphofu & Van Dyk, 2016). The above emphasises the critical importance of soldiers being ready for deployments that can escalate, sometimes abruptly, from low-intensity operations to intense combat, as in the case of the battle of Bangui.

Readiness for deployment involves three interrelated factors: personnel, equipment, and training. Mphofu and Van Dyk (2016) emphasise that 'human factors' (ergonomics, or the technological and psychological support of a work unit) play a crucial role in ensuring the readiness of soldiers for deployment. Closely related to human factors is a concept referred to as psychological capital, which includes characteristics such as resilience, self-efficacy, optimism and hope (Grundlingh, 2016). Grundlingh (2016) points out that resilience, in particular, enables soldiers to face the intense stress of multiple deployments and repeated combat.

One obvious way to reduce the stress associated with military operations is to lessen the frequency and duration of deployments. Although this may be a sensible policy approach in principle, it is not always possible given political and strategic realities and limited resources. Given this discussion, it is clear that increasing SANDF soldiers resilient is very important in order to increase their well-being and subsequently their performance. Given this back ground, it is the researcher's interest to explore the positive constructs of PsyCap, Perceived Organisational Support, and psychological empowerment in relation to well-being. Moreover, to establish the mediating impact of generation al difference in relation to these variables. These are variable that are drawn from positive psychology, a consent to be briefly explored below.

1.3 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Research in Psychology has focused on mental illness and interventions that treat these negative states (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015). The absence or reduction of negative psychological states, however, cannot be equated with being healthy (Achor, 2011). The field of Positive Psychology aims to promote positive mental states

through approaches that emphasise strengths, a positive mind-set, and a skill set that enables individuals to thrive and be healthy (Bolier *et al.*, 2013). A common belief is that success will lead to happiness. However, the Positive Psychology notion has created a new paradigm holding that happiness will lead to success (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Within the military context, it can be deduced that soldiers who are content or happy in the military are likely to perform better and they are likely to succeed within the mission area.

A modern pioneer of Positive Psychology is Martin Seligman. According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000, p. 5), “the aim of Positive Psychology is to begin to catalyse a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities”. Although their idea is similar to the perspectives of James and Maslow (2018), Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) clearly distance themselves from a humanistic psychology perspective because of its unscientific research methods (Froh, 2004). The field of Positive Psychology today is committed to conducting research using scientific methods.

Since Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) call encouraging scholars to investigate the positive side of the human psyche, interest and publications in Positive Psychology have grown rapidly (Donaldson, *et al.*, 2015). Although Positive Psychology has been criticised for only emphasising positive qualities and states, it should be borne in mind that well-being and flourishing are of a dialectical nature and are the product of both positive and negative experiences. That is, they are not merely a sole accumulation of positive events (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2016).

When applied to the workplace and organisations, Positive Psychology aims to identify what it is that helps individuals to perform at an excellent level and highlights processes that enable people to show excellence in their work situations (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015). Drawing from the literature of positive psychology, it is the researcher interest to explore the positive constructs of PsyCap, Perceived Organisational Support, and psychological empowerment in relation to well-being. Moreover, to establish the mediating impact of generation al difference in relation to these variables. The definition of these constructs shall be explored in the following section.

1.4 DEFINITION OF CONSTRUCTS

The definitions and descriptions of the four positive constructs of PsyCap, Perceived Organisational Support, psychological empowerment and well-being as well as generational cohorts which are the variables of interest in the present research, will be given in the following sections.

1.4.1 Psychological Capital

The concept of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) has been advanced and developed by Luthans in (2002). According to Luthans, *et al.*, (2007) the PsyCap contains a set of positive psychological capacities described by four dimensions summarized in the acronym "H.E.R. O" (Levene, 2015): hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism. Each of PsyCap's capabilities shows positive effects on health and work-related outcomes (Alarcon *et al.*, 2013; Fida, *et al.*, 2015; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). It is seen as a higher-order construct that states that the facets of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience together have strong synergistic effects as they then have a greater impact with regards to task and goal accomplishment than when each of the constituent facets is on its own (Luthans, *et al.*, 2007).

- a. **Self-efficacy** - refers to an individual's belief that he or she is able to execute tasks successfully (Bandura, 1982). Highly efficacious individuals strongly believe that they will be able to achieve their goals. This works like a self-fulfilling prophecy which allows people to behave in ways that are aligned with their expectations (Spector, 2012). It seems clear that increases in self-efficacy can lead directly to increases in performance across a variety of domains. In other words, military combatants who know that they have the requisite skills for task accomplishment and the ability to apply those skills are more likely to succeed (Samuels *et al.*, (2010).

- b. **Hope** - is a positive state that makes use of pathways and self-directed thinking in order to accomplish goals (Snyder, 2002). The use of pathways refers to the instrumental part of goal accomplishment, whereas agency relates to an individual's motivation or willpower to pursue a particular goal. This quality fits well for the military personnel let alone the South African National Defence Force members because a soldier with hope is a successful soldier.

- c. **Optimism** - is inherent in individuals who “expect that good things will happen to them” (Carver, *et al.*, 2010, p. 879). In addition, optimists have a positive attitude that enables them to see challenges as opportunities and as chances to pursue positive change (Schneider, 2001). Thus, optimism is a prerequisite among the military members in South Africa.

- d. **Resilience** - is a widely discussed construct with many definitions. A common characteristic among these definitions is that a person must show growth or a successful adaptation in the face of adversity (Britt, *et al.*, 2016). Resilience allows an employee to recover and bounce back from adversities, as well as to learn and grow from challenging experiences (Luthans *et al.*, 2015).

Given the above definitions, it appears that, PsyCap is a positive attitude and can be learned and developed over time. In the military context, deriving from the researchers above, PsyCap can be defined as having perseverance, trust and positive outlook when executing military duties and have the wiliness to go extra mile in order to achieve organisational objective and goals. PsyCap contributes to improved wellbeing of employees (Luthans, *et al.*, 2008; Avey, *et al.*, 2010; Manzano-García & Ayala, 2017).

1.4.2 Well-being

Well-being as a scientific construct has its roots in Aristotle’s concept of eudemonia. For Aristotle, eudemonia (i.e., well-being and happiness) was considered a robust product of a flourishing existence. It was not thought to be a short-lived mood or feeling, but a deep and meaningful description of a life well-lived. Later, philosopher Locke (1689) penned the now well-known phrase, “the pursuit of happiness,” and he included the phrase no fewer than four times in the second book of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (McMahon, 2004). In more modern times, well-being has become more of a lay construct (Wright, *et al.*, 2007); however, scientific researchers have found various ways to operationalize and examine the construct of well-being. Well-being is typically thought of as a global, life-encompassing perception of more positive emotions than negative emotions. Though researchers have historically focused primarily on negative emotions and the specific action tendencies associated with them (Lazarus, 1991), recent work by positive psychology researchers

has highlighted the importance of fostering a better understanding of how positive emotions affect the cognitive, physical, and social functioning of individuals (Fredrickson, 1998).

Theory and research on positive psychology have identified two facets of wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2003). The first facet of wellbeing can be defined as the person's general happiness with his/her life (hedonic well-being: Diener, *et al.*, 1985), while the second one is concerned with self-realization or personal growth (eudemonic well-being: Ryff & Keyes 1995).

Well-being has become the main research area of many Positive Psychology scholars (Linley, *et al.*, 2009). Researchers have carried out studies with different approaches in order to define well-being (Culbertson, *et al.*, 2010; Waterman, *et al.*, 2008). For example, it was proposed that well-being can be differentiated in terms of hedonic and eudemonic well-being. Hedonic well-being is considered to reflect feelings of happiness, which contain the experience of positive affect and pleasure (Culbertson *et al.*, 2010). Eudemonic well-being, on the other hand, refers to the factors that motivate individuals to strive towards their full potential (Waterman *et al.*, 2008). Although the conceptualisation of hedonic and eudemonic well-being is popular among researchers, there remain concerns as to whether they are distinct and separate constructs because of high correlations between hedonic and eudemonia (Gallagher, *et al.*, 2009; Linley *et al.*, 2009). Recent research indicates that hedonic and eudemonic well-being may be regarded as one higher-order well-being factor (Disabato, *et al.*, 2016; Longo, *et al.*, 2016).

Well-being is defined as: "the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one's true potential" (Ryff, 1995, p. 100). However, Well-being is a multi-dimensional subject. According to Brodsky (1988), Well-being has four characteristics: subjective and emotional aspects, a state as opposed to a continuous part of who we are, a product of personal endeavour, and positive movement toward achieving goals rather than being negative and involved in personal conflicts. Brodsky also describes several antecedents of Well-being including work environment, physical health, career paths, and a low level of stress. Ryff (1989) identifies six unique dimensions of Well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

Given the above theorists and multi-dimensions and views of well-being, it is clear that an individual's well-being is relevant to the workplace and should be in the interest of each organisation, the military is no exclusion. The researcher is of the view that, soldiers who have high levels of positive emotion and may be satisfied with life in general, subsequently at work and thus strive to perform optimally at their work function.

1.4.3 Perceived Organisational Support

According to organisational support theory (OST) Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, (2011), the workers who obtain valued assets (e.g., rise in pay, opportunities for developmental training) build up Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and hence feel obliged to struggle hard to pay back their employing organisation. They help their organisation to develop rapidly and to attain its objectives due to the custom of reciprocity. The OST has attracted the attention of several researchers because the relationship between employee and organisation has a potential value from the employees' point of view (Barrera *et al.*, 1981; Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986; Pierce *et al.*, 1996). POS refers to perception of employees that their organisation is concerned about their well-being and values their work (Cullen, *et al.*, 2014; Eisenberger, *et al.*, 1986). On the one hand, POS refers to aspects which include recognition and rewards in order to express appreciation for good employee performance. On the other hand, POS can also be seen as the organisation's effort to contribute to their employees' socio-emotional well-being. It often encompasses the employees' perception of the kinds of organisational policies and HR practices that facilitate family care or time off due to personal circumstances that place strain on employees (Worley, *et al.*, 2009).

Similarly, POS is considered as a support received from both the supervisor and co-workers (Yang *et al.*, 2015; Kurtessis *et al.*, 2015; Hämmig, 2017) and refers to how individuals evaluate the help given by his professional entourage. These aids can be both intangible (advice, listening, interpersonal exchange) and tangible (financial loans, leave, etc.). Moreover, POS is also what people think about the extent of their contributions and how much the organisation cares about their well-being (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2015). According to Neves and Eisenberger (2015), perceived organisational support (POS) can be explained as the view of employees about the care which they

receive from their employing organisation and the degree to which their performance is appreciated and acknowledged by their organisation.

Reciprocally, the organisation is interested by the POS as an indicator enabling it to assess the degree of individuals' commitment. Thus, drawing from the literature review above, the researcher defines POS as how individuals evaluate the help given by their professional entourage. A positive POS is manifested by a strong commitment of individuals who feel beholden to the organisation and persevere to achieve organisational performance. Considering the notion that the employee, who notices that his organisation takes his expectations into account, will do more efforts to achieve his goals (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Earlier research in organisational behaviour studied organisational support by examining the positive relationship between workers and their management in which employees were beneficially motivated to complete their tasks in a required time. Besides this, they were emotionally identified with their employing organisation. Thus, the workers started to engage themselves in contributing towards their organisation and achieved their common goals irrespective of the reward policy.

Therefore, given the above discussion from different researchers, it can be concluded that, POS can be explained as the view of employees about the care which they receive from their employing organisation and the degree to which their performance is appreciated and acknowledged by their organisation. Additionally, the researcher purports that, the recognition of increased organisational support is likely to lead to improved relationships of soldiers with their commanders and subordinates. Thus, military members who perceive to have support from the organisation are most likely to have an improved wellbeing (Neves & Eisenberger, 2015). In other words, those members will be more committed, interactive, more willing to volunteer for most military duties and able to go over and above their stipulated tasks compared to those who feel less valued. As such, it can thus be safely argued that such soldiers may feel a sense of Psychological Empowerment by the military. A construct to be discussed in the following section.

1.4.4 Psychological empowerment

The concept of Psychological Empowerment has been extensively studied during the last two decades in different contexts, such as hotel staff (Amenumey & Lockwood, 2008), public welfare caseworkers (Petter *et al.*, 2002), nurses (Koberg *et al.*, 1999; Knol & Van Linge, 2009), social workers (Itzhaky & York, 2000) and teachers (Marks & Louis, 1999). Psychological Empowerment is considered to be an important element of contemporary management in all kinds of organisations (Spreitzer, 1995; Petter *et al.*, 2002; & Pitts, 2005). Organisations use empowerment as import instrument to enhance employee's involvement that helps the organisations to achieve its short and long-term goals (Lawler, 1986) and to give them motivation for completion of a task (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). If empowerment is defined as the: "experience of authority and responsibility" (Mathieu *et al.*, 2006, p. 98), it is regarded as an antecedent or a condition for engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

The definition of Psychological Empowerment is given as: "increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role: competence, impact, meaning, and self-determination" (Spreitzer, 1995 p. 1443). Spreitzer (1995) further illustrated that those four cognitive dimensions infer a person's willingness to shape his or her work role and context. Referring to the work of Gretchen Spreitzer, the authors describe empowerment as a multidimensional construct comprising:

- e. **Meaning** - "value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to one's own ideal or standards".
- f. **Competence** - "an individual's belief in his or her capability to perform activities with skill".
- g. **Autonomy** - a sense of having "a choice in initiating and regulating actions".
- h. **Impact** - "the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work."

Psychological Empowerment has been taken as an important variable for studying organisational outcomes since long time, for instance, innovation, better performance, and commitment (Kanter, 1977; Petter, *et.al.*, 2002; Avolio, *et.al*, 2004). Based on motivational theory, Work environment and situational attributes have significant role in shaping psychological empowerment (Chen *et al.*, 2014). Over the last couple of

years, more than seventy percent of organisations have taken initiatives to empower their employees (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2008). Thus, given the above perspectives, it can be established that, soldiers who are empowered will be likely to perceive themselves to be more competent and think that they have more influence on their job and organisations. Psychological Empowerment can be defined as state of be given power and enthusiasm to think and plan independently towards the goals that have been set even in a situation where there is strict discipline like in a military setting. This technically implies that the military have that free will to apply all their mental faculties, be innovative, bring new ideas even in the midst of strict instructions.

1.4.5 General Difference/Cohorts

The generational cohorts particularly prevalent in today's workforce are generation Y (Gen Y) also known as millennials, generation X (Gen X) and baby boomers (Bennett, Pitt & Price, 2012; Saba, 2013; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge *et al.*, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Another generational grouping mentioned in the literature, but not of interest to the current study is the traditionalist, silent generation or veterans (Comperatore & Nerone, 2008; Kupperschmidt, 2000). The traditionalist or silent generation is no longer employed within the South African National Defence Force (military), as they would all have reached the compulsory retirement age of 65 in 2010 (Department of Defence, 2014).

A number of studies show that the different generations have a distinct and unique perception of work, in terms of what motivates them (Benson & Brown, 2011; Close, 2015; Kaifi *et al.*, 2012; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010). Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010) emphasise that understanding these differences could assist organisations in reducing workplace conflict and misunderstandings between co-workers. These differences in work-related behaviour and attitudes could also have an impact on employees' job satisfaction and could indicate a need for creative and effective organisational policies, leadership strategies and management styles to attract and retain productive employees (Curry, 2005; Martins & Martins, 2013; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

The positive capacity of PsyCap, the Psychological Empowerment, the meaning of POS, and the construct of well-being have thus been outlined. In the following section, the relationships between these concepts will be discussed.

1.5 LINKING PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT, PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT, WELL-BEING AND GENERATIONAL COHORTS

According to the JD-R Theory, there is an interaction between job demands, job resources and personal resources. Demands initiate health impairment processes and resources fuel motivational processes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). JD-R Theory suggests that demands and resources interact in the following two ways: resources can buffer the negative effects of demands by facilitating coping in stressful situations, while demands can reinforce the effects of resources on motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) and well-being (Bakker & Sanz-Vergel, 2013) by becoming salient in stressful situations. Organisational support and personal resources can be perceived as resources to deal with workplace stress. These resources are not limited to personal but have their starting point which is the home of that person who is either put under a demanding situation or motivating situation. A most remarkable resource that can be obtained at home is emotional support from those people close to an affected person. This is referred to by DeLongis et al., (1988) as the psycho-social resources. Moreover, it was shown that job resources help personal resources to flourish (Xanthopoulou, *et al.*, 2007). For this reason, POS and the personal resource of PsyCap can contribute to employee well-being.

In a study, Yamg, *et al.*, (2013) on the impact of POS and PsyCap on burnout. The findings indicated that POS and the four dimensions of PsyCap together can reduce burnout. It means that POS and PsyCap are positively linked. Liu, *et al.*, (2013) studied POS, PsyCap, and depression in male correctional officers. Results of their study indicated a positive relationship between POS and PsyCap (including its four components). Research on the relationship between perceived organisational support (POS) and PsyCap showed that POS has a positive influence on the four dimensions of PsyCap (Hui, *et al.*, 2014). If POS and PsyCap are related, then it's onerous for this research to underestimate their role in the well-being of the South African Defence force members. This can in other words be said that if these two variables are linked then they are proportionally crucial thus to leave one of them will be an academic and psychological mistake. They are the defining variables in order to unveil the role played by generational difference on military personnel.

Maan, *et al.*, (2020) found that individuals' POS helps boost their obligations toward organisation in order to reciprocate favourably. These individuals in the context of the study refers to the soldiers. In support, Roemer and Harris (2018) aver that Organisational Support (POS), PsyCap and wellbeing are positively correlated to one another. From the literature above, it can be deduced that POS and PsyCap are positively related to improved employee wellbeing. In the military context, it means that soldiers who have high PsyCap and organisational support adapt well to the operational stress, cope and maintain healthy mental level when executing their unpredictable situations.

There is limited research that explores the differences in Psychological Empowerment between generational cohorts. Complimentary to the study of PsyCap variances by generation, Sparks (2012) found significant differences among generations psychological empowerment scores. Baby Boomers and Generation X nurses differed in their total psychological empowerment scores how they perceived their environments.

There is limited research that explores the differences in PsyCap between generational cohorts (Sweet & Swayze, 2017). Staples (2014) explored the generational differences in PsyCap across multiple industries with a sample of 347 respondents. The findings indicated that Baby Boomers' PsyCap scores were higher than their younger generations and ANOVA results suggested statistically significant difference among the generations. Sweet and Swayze (2017) studies for nurses in the hospital found that, Nurses overall psychological capital scores and self-efficacy significantly varied by generation, with Baby Boomers having the highest overall level of psychological capital, followed by Generation X, and Millennials. Self-efficacy was greater for nurses working on day shift, as compared to night shift. These are the only research conducted on PsyCap scores by generation.

Research proves that the benefit of Organisational Support to the well-being of the employees can never be denied. According to Neves and Eisenberger (2015), Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, (2011) found that a high Organisational Support contributes positively to employees in terms of subjective wellbeing both in and outside work. Roemer and Harris (2018) found that Organisational Support is positively correlated to wellbeing. Based on literature cited above, the researcher argues that

soldiers who perceive to have high organisational support may create a sense of indebtedness in their' minds which motivate them to enhance their wellbeing within the workplace and deployment mission area.

Furthermore, Empowerment has significant importance for implementing change in organisations (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). The study of Wallach and Mueller (2006) showed that those employees who were involved in decision making had higher Psychological Empowerment. Those individuals who are high in PsyCap are hopeful in term of accomplishment of their goals, are optimistic about achieving positive results, are more confident in making a difference on their job and possess the ability to get back to normal after facing a tragedy. Thus, these individuals seem to perceive themselves as having a great impact on their organisational activities and outcomes (James *et al.*, 2008).

Moreover, people who feel empowered tend to have a strong sense of self-efficacy and feel that they are capable of doing their jobs well and making things happen (Johns & Saks, 2011). Given the above discussion, it appears that by psychologically empowering soldiers, for example, by giving them more responsibilities or autonomy, their positive feelings can be expected to increase which may enhance their level of wellbeing in the military. This feeling may however differ from one soldier to another as well as across different generational cohorts.

1.6 THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF GENERAL DIFFERENCES

A plethora of research on generational differences exists internationally. Very little research on the topic has, been undertaken in a South African context (Martins & Martins, 2013; Nkomo, 2020). Smaliukiene and Bekesiene (2020) findings in the military context indicated that generation has a strong moderating impact on the components of subjective wellbeing at work. Social relationship, as a socio-emotional experience, is the most important component of wellbeing at work for Gen Z, while socio-emotional enablement plays a central role in wellbeing at work for Gen X (1965 - 1980) and Gen Y (1981 - 1996). The findings from the research conducted by Ardiansyah and Darmasetiawan (2019) show that individuals can overcome differences between generations if they are able to manage their well-being. Godinho-Bitencourt, *et al.*, (2019) found that the intrinsic motivation of Generation Y is directly associated with the perception of organisational support but is significantly moderated

by manager support. These results demonstrate the influence of manager support on the intrinsic motivation of the individuals belonging to Generation Y, indicating that leaders are the moderating agents of the institution, acting as a bridge between institution and employees.

Sweet and Swayze (2017) found that PsyCap and self-efficacy significantly varied by generation, with Baby Boomers having the highest overall level of PsyCap, followed by Generation X, and Millennials. However, these studies did not include PsyCap and POS, Psychological Empowerment in their studies. Therefore, the contribution of POS Psychological Empowerment and PsyCap in predicting employee wellbeing remain unknown. Secondly, the inclusion generational differences in mitigating the relationship between POS, PysCap, Psychological Empowerment and employee wellbeing has not been explored in the military context. The study aims to address these gaps by investigating the mediating role of generational difference on the relationship between PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support on the Wellbeing of the soldiers.

This section explained the proposed relationship between POS, Psychological Empowerment, PsyCap, and well-being as well as generational difference. The problem statement drawn from this discussion for the proposed study are outlined in the following section.

1.7 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Poor employee health and well-being negatively affect organisations at the lower levels of organisational commitment thereby resulting to (Matin et al., 2012), more absenteeism (Olivares Faúndez, et al., 2014), decreased productivity (Dewa, *et al.*, 2014, Smoktunowicz et al., 2015), lower levels of job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions. (Tziner, et al., 2015). Various studies (Matin et al., 2012; Olivares Faúndez et al., 2014; Dewa et al., 2014; Smoktunowicz et al., 2015) have emphasised the multifaceted and significant impact of poor employee health and well-being on organisations. This results in reduced organisational commitment, more frequent absences, lower productivity, decreased job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions (Tziner et al., 2015). These outcomes can make organisations less competitive by decreasing productivity and increasing turnover, leading to significant financial expenses.

In addition, poor employee well-being can lead to a negative work environment that affects employee creativity and engagement. Considering the Positive Psychology movement's focus on preventing illness and promoting well-being, it is important to examine the factors that influence employee well-being, particularly in military settings such as the South African Defence Force (SANDF). Nevertheless, there is a lack of research on positive constructs that enhance the well-being of military personnel.

Recent studies conducted by Brooks & Greenberg (2018) and Michaud & Ralph (2021) emphasise the notable influence of inadequate well-being on military personnel. The studies show that high stress levels, exposure to traumatic events, and prolonged deployments can result in mental health issues, decreased job performance, and increased turnover intentions among military members. In addition, a study conducted by Anderson, Meyer, and Goldenberg (2022) highlights the significance of addressing well-being issues in military organisations to maintain operational readiness and effectiveness.

The impact of low employee well-being does not only make organisations less competitive due to low productivity, high turnover and absenteeism, but it also causes huge financial costs. In addition to that, low levels of commitment and job satisfaction are likely to create a work atmosphere characterised by negativity, which does not promote a work environment where employees thrive and express creativity. In light of the Positive Psychology movement, which does not emphasise the treatment of illness, but rather focuses on its prevention and on the active promotion of well-being, it is vital to analyse factors that contribute to employee well-being. Currently, not much is known regarding the dynamics of positive constructs that help to improve employee specifically the soldiers or military personnel well-being. This paucity of relevant research thus creates an urgent need for the present study, which is concerned with the constructs of POS, psychological empowerment and PsyCap and the way they operate together to target the military personnel of the South African Defence Force well-being. It is essential to consider the mediating role of generational differences in order to grasp the complex interactions that impact the well-being of military personnel. The study aims to provide insights into effective interventions for improving the well-being of SANDF members by examining how generational differences mediate the relationship between organisational support, psychological empowerment, Psychological Capital, and well-being. Moreover, the mediating effect of general

differences in relation to these variables. This led to the research questions drawn from this discussion for the study are outlined in the following section.

1.8 AIM OF THE STUDY

The study aims to address these gaps by investigating the mediating role of generational difference on the relationship between PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support on the Wellbeing of the soldiers.

1.9 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Taking all aspects mentioned into account, the main research objectives are as follows:

Taking all aspects mentioned into account, the main research objectives are as follows:

O1: To determine the contribution of Psychological Capital in predicting Employee Wellbeing of soldiers.

O2: To determine the contribution of Psychological Empowerment in predicting Employee Wellbeing of soldiers.

O3: To determine the contribution of Organisational Support in predicting Employee Wellbeing of soldiers.

O4: To determine contribution of Psychological Capital, psychological empowerment, perceived organisational support in predicting well-being.

O5: Generational Differences as (X, Y & Z) mediator

a. To establish if Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) mediates the relationship between Psychological Capital and well-being.

b. To establish if Generational differences (X, Y, Z) mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment and well-being?

c. To establish if Generational differences (X, Y, Z) mediates the relationship between perceived organisational support and well-being?

1.10 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The above research objectives gave rise to the following questions which were guided by the study:

Q1: What is the contribution of Psychological Capital in predicting Employee Wellbeing of soldiers?

Q2: What is the contribution of Psychological Empowerment in predicting Employee Wellbeing of soldiers?

Q3: What is the contribution of Organisational Support in predicting Employee Wellbeing of soldiers?

Q4: What is significant contribution of the combined effect of Psychological Capital, psychological empowerment, perceived organisational support in predicting well-being?

Q5: Generational Differences as (X, Y & Z) mediator

- a. How do the Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) mediate the relationship between Psychological Capital and well-being?
- b. How do the Generational differences (X, Y, Z) mediate the relationship between psychological empowerment and well-being?
- c. How do the Generational differences (X, Y, Z) mediate the relationship between perceived organisational support and well-being?

1.12 HYPOTHESES

Organisations usually offer support because they want to promote well-being in their employees and enhance performance together with other desirable work outcomes. The absence of well-being or even the presence of ill-being is a critical factor with a huge negative financial impact. It is vital for an organisation to avoid costs due to employee illness, lack of motivation, absenteeism, and weak performance. In order to make sure that the offered support results in employee well-being, it is crucial to investigate the underlying mechanism of support structures that impact well-being.

From a Positive Psychology perspective, it is assumed that job resources contribute to a positive mind-set which is characterized by cognitive processes that energize, motivate and protect individuals from adversity, resulting in a greater sense of well-being. It is therefore interesting to investigate whether generational cohorts act as a mediator in the relationship between Psy-Cap, POS, Psychological empowerment and well-being. If this is the case, the military and organisations will be able to enhance the effectiveness of the support offered by providing support structures that target the self-

efficacy, hope, optimism, empowerment, and resilience of employees. Moreover, Self-determination theory, as cited by Deci *et al* (2017), assumes that all individuals regardless of their generational gaps have three universal and evolved needs - autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and when the three needs are satisfied, individuals are motivated by their own internal nature to perform.

Given the above theories, it can be deduced that, each generation has different work-related beliefs due to their unique set of behaviours, attitudes, and values that impact their preferences. As such, observing and understanding those generational differences and distinct needs will help commanders to better integrate members/soldiers into the workplace for mutual success and in turn, all soldiers to consider work as a safe space to invest in and enjoy the benefits that come with it. Once soldiers get the feelings of joy at work, it means that they are satisfied, and they get motivated to do more at the same time. Positive feelings lead to one's positive wellbeing.

The present study aims to analyse whether similar findings can be found in the workplace regarding the mediating role of generational difference in the relationship between Psy-Cap, POS, Psychological empowerment and well-being.

As highlighted, within the frame of SDT recognizes the importance of feeling connected to others as a basic psychological need (the so-called need for relatedness) and is considered a fundamental ingredient for functioning at optimal levels (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017). Hence, a soldier who perceives an emotional connection with his/her social environment, believes that s/he is cared for and loved, and feels special to his/her key social partners (for example, colleagues-commander-relationships) has satisfied his/her need for relatedness. This assertion lays the foundation for the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1:

- a. *H₀: There is no significant relationship between PsyCap and Wellbeing.*

- b. *H₁: There is a significant relationship between PsyCap and Wellbeing.*

From the view of SDT, it is possible for one to transform from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation when empowered psychologically. Employees can be intrinsically motivated for at least parts of their jobs, if not for all aspects of them, and when intrinsically motivated the individuals tend to display high-quality performance and wellness (Deci *et al*, 2017). Within the military context, soldiers can be assigned tasks to do various assignments from time to time so as to address their need for competence and have psychological feelings of competence. Such feelings are a motivational factor and leads to positive psychology and ultimate wellbeing. For this reason, it can be presumed that.

Hypothesis 2:

c. H₀: There is no significant relationship between psychological empowerment and Wellbeing.

d. H₁: There is a significant relationship between psychological empowerment and Wellbeing.

Application of SDT and PERMA theory in an organisation helps create a conducive environment that promotes wellbeing of an employee, including soldiers. Additionally, within the frame of JD-R Theory, Job Resources should contribute to overall well-being by buffering the negative effects of job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Thus, military members who perceive to have support from the organisation are most likely to have an improved wellbeing (Neves & Eisenberger, 2015). Once an employee feels valued, s/he goes an extra mile when executing his or her duties irrespective of the rewarding policy. This assertion lays the foundation for the third hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3:

e. H₀: There is no significant relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Wellbeing.

f. H₁: There is a significant relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Wellbeing.

From SDT, SET and Generational theory, it can be deduced that generations relate differently. These individual differences explain the individual's personalities. According to Saville (2016) personality is an individual's preferred or typical way of

behaving, thinking and feeling. This suggests that, to maintain a high-performing, satisfied workforce across all three (X, Y & Z) generations of employees and their wellbeing, organisations need to understand the key generational differences across the personality preferences.

Furthermore, based on the SDT and Generational theory, it can be deduced that generations relate differently. The five distinct elements of PERMA theory which combines components of both hedonic and eudemonia are intrinsically rewarding and when combined together result in human flourishing and instil positive emotions. PsyCap is directly connected to positive emotions and positive emotions are an outcome of PsyCap. Positive emotions are an integral element of wellbeing. Psychologically empowered individuals perceive their work as having a meaning and impact, and therefore they work proactively and are more resilient in their efforts. Furthermore, organisational support is crucial in any organisation for its added advantage. Supporting structures in a work environment promotes wellbeing of employees. Drawing from the above theories and discussion, this assertion lays the foundation for the last hypotheses.

Hypothesis 4:

H0: There is no significant contribution of Psychological Capital, psychological empowerment, perceived organisational support in predicting of well-being.

H1: There is significant contribution of Psychological Capital, psychological empowerment, perceived organisational support in predicting of well-being.

Hypothesis 5a:

g. H0: Generational differences (X, Y & Z) does not mediate the relationship between psychological capital and well-being.

h. H1: Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) have a significant mediation effect on the relationship between Psychological Capital and well-being.

Hypothesis 5b:

i. H0: Generational differences (X, Y & Z) does not mediate the relationship between psychological empowerment and well-being.

- j. H₁: Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) have a significant mediation effect on the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and well-being.*

Hypothesis 5c:

- k. H₀: Generational differences (X, Y & Z) does not have mediate the relationship between perceived organisational support and well-being.*
- l. H₁: Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) have a significant mediation effect on the relationship between Organisational Support and well-being.*

1.13 CONTRIBUTION AND VALUE OF THE STUDY

The anticipated value of the study lies in gaining a better understanding of the factors that contribute to employee well-being and the mediating effect of generational difference. It will be of great benefit to all concerned to investigate how organisational support, psychological empowerment and psychological capital can operate in order to promote the well-being of employees. This is important because organisations face huge costs due to employee absenteeism, lack of motivation, and low work performance resulting from low levels of employee well-being or even ill-being (OlivaresFaúndez, et al., 2014). The present study aims investigated how the positive capacity of generational difference accounts for the relationship between PsyCap, POS, psychological empowerment and well-being. Knowledge about this mechanism will allow organisations to offer support structures that target the PsyCap of their employees in order to promote their well-being. If job resources like organisational support and psychological empowerment can fuel the personal resources of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, employees will not only be accumulating resources that protect them from the negative effects of a demanding military environment and that assist them in dealing with challenges: the ensuing developed and positive mind-set could also contribute to a greater sense of well-being.

For this reason, the present study is regarded as offering a potentially valuable contribution to the existing body of research and will also, it is hoped, reveal practical implications and applications for organisations. Moreover, on theoretical level, it is anticipated that it may create a model that can be used to measure the contribution of

PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support on the Wellbeing of the soldiers and the model can not only be applied within the military units but can be applied to different organisation across different age groups. This study can in future be employed as a framework of considering the psychological side of the soldiers and other forces in regard to their well-being. Taking into cognisance PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support on the well-being of the soldiers the responsible authorities can use this research as a measuring tool to scrutiny the development of their members and their attitudes towards work.

This study's value is in its ability to produce new insights into the factors that impact employee well-being, especially in military organisations, and the role of generational differences as a mediator. Through an examination of how organisational support, psychological empowerment, and Psychological Capital (PsyCap) interact to enhance well-being, the study seeks to offer valuable insights for guiding organisational practices and support systems. The study's main contribution lies in its exploration of how positive psychological resources, like PsyCap, can help alleviate the challenges of a rigorous military setting and enhance employees' overall well-being. This study aims to investigate how job resources such as organisational support and psychological empowerment contribute to personal resources like self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. The goal is to create a model that illustrates the intricate relationship among these factors.

This theoretical model can be used as a framework for assessing and analysing the impact of PsyCap, psychological empowerment, and organisational support on the well-being of soldiers in military units. Furthermore, it is adaptable for various organisational settings and age groups, serving as a versatile tool for evaluating and improving employee well-being. From a practical standpoint, the study aims to uncover implications and applications for organisations, especially in creating support systems that focus on employees' PsyCap to enhance their well-being. By comprehending how these factors work in conjunction, organisations can customise interventions and policies to establish a positive work environment that promotes employee well-being and resilience.

1.14 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will adopt a quantitative approach. Devault (2020) emphasizes that Quantitative research is the process of gathering observable data to answer a research question using statistical, computational, or mathematical techniques. A positivist paradigm will be used in order to show the how the world is perceived throughout the research. This implies that the researcher approaches the respondents and the field from a positivist point of view. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) put it clear that, the Positivist paradigm defines a worldview to research, which is grounded in what is known in research methods as the scientific method of investigation. They further allude that, experimentation, observation and reason based on experience ought to be the basis for understanding human behaviour, and therefore, the only legitimate means of extending knowledge and human understanding. It is also important for research to have a plan that is followed through the end. As it is in construction of a building so is such with research, a plan is needed this plan is a research design. A research design according to Fellows and Liu (2021) is the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to conduct a study. The design allows researchers to sharpen the research methods suitable for the subject matter and set up their studies for success. This research will adopt a descriptive research design, explanatory research design, and an exploratory research design. A stratified sampling will be used to determine the number of participants that will be involved in this study. Close-ended questionnaires will be employed in this study to obtain the data from the sampled SANDF members. A statistical package Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used in the analysis of the data for ease of analysis and interpretation of results.

1.15 FRAMEWORK FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

In Chapter one - the overview of the study is outlined. The background of the study and topic is traced, the problem is clearly stated, the variables of this research are defined and positioned according to their criticality as well as the contribution and value of this this study has been explained.

In chapter two - the researcher set out to explore the theoretical approaches that will be used to inform the discussion of the PsyCap, Perceived Organisational Support, psychological empowerment in relation to well-being. Moreover, the mediating impact

of generational difference in relation to these variables. Moreover, the researcher explores the empirical studies that will be used to understand the previous empirical research regarding the PsyCap, Perceived Organisational Support, and psychological empowerment in relation to well-being. Moreover, the empirical research on the mediating impact of generational difference in relation to these variables.

In chapter three - have presented a detailed discussion on the quantitative research strategy that framed this research. Discussed the reasons for the various methodological choices and explain how I went about selecting the participants, conducting the research, obtaining ethical clearance and the data analysis process. I reflect on these methodological choices as well as the challenges that emerged during the research process. Lastly, the researcher reflects on her position and how this may have impacted on the research process.

In Chapter four - presented the empirical research and also reflected on the findings from the research.

Lastly, in chapter five - presented a discussion of the findings in relation to the theories and literature (Chapter 2).

1.16 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The present chapter introduced to the field of Positive Psychology, the paradigm of generational difference, and the positive capacity of PsyCap. Moreover, the constructs of POS psychological empowerment and well-being were briefly outlined and the relationship between POS, psychological empowerment, PsyCap and well-being was explained. Furthermore, the aim of the study was presented, which is to analyse whether generational difference acts as a mediator in the relationship between PsyCap, psychological empowerment, POS and well-being. The analysis of this mechanism will provide a better understanding of how organisational support operates and will have valuable implications for the military as an organisation.

The following chapter will discuss the literature review of the constructs of PsyCap, psychological empowerment, POS, and well-being as well as the mediating effect of generational difference in detail. Additionally, the chapter will present the proposed model and hypotheses of this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the background, aim and objectives of the study. This chapter provides a review of literature relevant to understanding the mediating role of generational differences on the relationship between psychological capital, psychological empowerment, organisational support, and wellbeing of soldiers in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). First, the context of the SANDF is discussed, including an overview of what the organisation stands for and how concepts like wellbeing and psychological capital apply to soldiers. Next, key theoretical frameworks that inform the study variables are outlined, including self-determination theory, the PERMA wellbeing model, conservation of resources theory, the job demands-resources model, and social exchange theory.

A review of empirical research on each of the main variables then follows. For psychological capital, psychological empowerment, organisational support, wellbeing, and generational differences, the overview summarizes main concepts, definitions, and components. The empirical studies section synthesizes relevant research on each variable across different contexts. The relationships between the study variables are also discussed, drawing on the theoretical frameworks to hypothesize how psychological capital, psychological empowerment, and organisational support may predict soldier wellbeing.

Generational differences are considered in terms of how they influence personality, motivation, and experiences in the military context specifically. Research is reviewed on how these variables may impact soldiers differently across Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z cohorts. Gaps in the current literature are highlighted, particularly the lack of research on these topics in the SANDF population. The hypotheses for the study are presented, focusing on the expected relationships between the variables and the mediating role of generational cohort. A proposed conceptual model depicts the hypothesized relationships visually.

The literature review provides a foundation for the present study on the mediating role of generational differences in the SANDF. It synthesizes relevant theories and prior research to justify the study focus, variables, context, and hypotheses. The next

chapter will describe the research methodology used to empirically investigate the hypotheses and relationships proposed in this chapter.

2.2 Context of SANDF

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is the military organisation tasked with safeguarding the Republic of South Africa and its populace. The establishment of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) occurred in 1994 subsequent to South Africa's inaugural democratic elections. This amalgamation entailed the integration of the formerly distinct entities, namely the South African Defence Force, the armed forces associated with African nationalist factions, and the military forces of the historical homelands (Heinecken, 2021).

Presently, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) comprises a total of more than 70,000 individuals in uniform, distributed across four distinct branches, namely the South African Army, the South African Air Force, the South African Navy, and the South African Military Health Service (DOD, 2020). The main objective of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is to safeguard and preserve the sovereignty, geographical boundaries, populace, and national interests of South Africa (Modise, 2021). This encompasses both exogenous dangers and assistance provided to other governmental agencies in situations pertaining to domestic security.

The distinctive circumstances of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) give rise to specific difficulties pertaining to psychological capital, empowerment, organisational support, and welfare. According to Malahlela (2020), soldiers encounter rigorous physical, mental, and psychological challenges. Simultaneously, the presence of a diverse workforce in terms of demographic characteristics, along with the integration of previously adversarial factions, gives rise to intricate human resource challenges (Heinecken, 2021). A crucial aspect lies in comprehending perspectives that are interconnected across generations, given that the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has significant generational cohorts ranging from Baby Boomers to Generation Z (Kgalanyane, 2020).

The primary objective of this literature review is to examine the most recent studies pertaining to the fundamental principles of psychological capital, empowerment, support, wellness, and generational disparities, with a specific emphasis on their application within military and South African National Defence Force (SANDF)

contexts. In order to facilitate the development and empowerment of soldiers across different time periods, it is valuable to draw upon the knowledge and findings of contemporary academic research. By incorporating insights from scholarly work, leadership strategies, training models, and organisational endeavours can be informed and optimised to effectively promote the effectiveness and overall welfare of soldiers. There is a substantial body of research available in fields such as education and business that extensively covers these subjects. However, there is a noticeable scarcity of literature specifically focused on defence forces, highlighting the necessity for studies like the one being conducted in the context of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

2.3.1 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a broad framework for understanding human motivation and personality development that was initially developed by psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (Ryan & Deci, 2020). SDT is rooted in the assumption that humans have an innate and natural tendency towards growth, integration of the self, and resolving incongruities in a healthy way. However, SDT proposes that there are key social-contextual factors that can either support or hinder this natural tendency. When an individual's social environment provides supports for basic psychological needs, they are more likely to exhibit autonomous motivation, healthy personality integration, and well-being. In contrast, when the social context is controlling, excessively chaotic, or neglectful of psychological needs, individuals are more likely to display controlled motivation, fragmentation of the self, and ill-being (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

SDT is especially important for grasping the motivational factors behind Psychological Empowerment. SDT suggests that people are driven by three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Within the study, Psychological Empowerment, encompassing dimensions like meaning, competence, and self-determination, can be viewed as corresponding to these basic needs. SDT offers a theoretical framework for examining the impact of Psychological Empowerment on the wellbeing of SANDF members. Having autonomy involves feeling a sense of volition and control over one's actions and decisions (Ryan

& Deci, 2020). Being competent involves feeling effective and capable in one's activities and pursuits. Establishing connections and relationships with others is essential in understanding relatedness.

Psychological Empowerment is defined in the study as including dimensions like meaning, competence, and self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These dimensions are closely aligned with the fundamental needs suggested by SDT. For example, the concept of meaning is linked to the importance of connection, as people strive to discover purpose and significance in their positions and relationships within the SANDF. Being competent is essential for individuals as they aim to enhance their skills and abilities to excel in their military responsibilities (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Self-determination is crucial as individuals in the military context seek autonomy and control over their actions and decisions.

SDT offers a theoretical framework to analyse how Psychological Empowerment, influenced by the fulfilment of basic psychological needs, impacts the wellbeing of SANDF members. When people feel empowered in their roles, experience a sense of meaning, competence, and autonomy, they are more likely to experience greater satisfaction, engagement, and overall wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Exploring the motivational factors that drive Psychological Empowerment from the perspective of SDT can aid in pinpointing methods to boost empowerment and support the wellbeing of SANDF members, ultimately bolstering the effectiveness and resilience of the military organisation.

At the core of SDT are three key psychological needs - the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to feeling volitional and in control over one's behaviours and goals. Competence involves feeling effective in one's interactions with the environment and experiencing mastery over tasks. Relatedness refers to feeling cared for by and connected to others. SDT posits that satisfaction of these three basic psychological needs is essential for enabling optimal motivation, performance, and well-being (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

In addition to the basic needs, SDT also delineates different forms of motivation that can be promoted depending on the social context. Intrinsic motivation arises from the inherent satisfaction derived from an activity itself. It represents the most autonomous form of motivation. In contrast, extrinsic motivation comes from external sources such

as rewards, punishments, evaluations, or recognition from others. Extrinsic motivation can vary in its level of autonomy - some forms represent autonomous regulation such as doing an activity because it aligns with one's values, while other forms are more controlled such as acting to gain a reward or avoid a punishment (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

SDT proposes that excessive control and lack of need support in a social context will diminish intrinsic motivation and promote more controlled extrinsic motivation. In the long run, this thwarting of needs and autonomy can negatively impact personality integration, performance, and wellness. On the other hand, when the social environment provides autonomy support, optimal challenges, and a sense of caring, this facilitates intrinsic motivation and more autonomous extrinsic motivation. As a result, individuals experience greater volition, personal growth, and well-being (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2016).

2.3.1.1 *SDT in Organisations and Employee Well-Being*

In recent years, there has been growing interest in applying the key principles of SDT to employee motivation, performance and well-being in organisational contexts. Both laboratory experiments and field studies have provided extensive evidence that managerial and organisational practices that are need-supportive enhance employees' autonomous regulation which in turn is associated with more positive work attitudes, behaviours, and well-being (Manganelli *et al.*, 2020).

For example, leadership styles that allow greater autonomy over work methods and decisions have been linked to higher employee motivation and engagement. Providing competency support through training, optimal job design, and constructive feedback promotes mastery and intrinsic motivation. Fostering a caring culture where employees feel respected and valued enhances belongingness needs and autonomous regulation (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2016).

In a recent study examining SDT principles in relation to employee well-being, Manganelli *et al.*, (2020) found that perceived autonomy support from leaders positively predicted satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness among employees. In turn, need satisfaction was positively associated with work engagement and negatively associated with emotional exhaustion. The researchers concluded that leadership styles that incorporate autonomy, involvement,

and care for subordinates can fulfil basic psychological needs which promote occupational well-being.

Other scholars have looked more closely at the differentiation between autonomous and controlled motivation proposed by SDT. For example, Güntert (2015) examined various motivational orientations among Volunteers using the SDT framework and found that autonomous motivation was positively linked to satisfaction, well-being, and intention to remain a volunteer. In contrast, controlled motivation was unrelated or negatively related to these outcomes.

Similarly, Graves *et al.*, (2015) demonstrated that autonomous motivation was associated with higher overall well-being among entrepreneurs, while controlled motivation predicted more anxiety and depression. Intervention studies designed to enhance autonomous regulation in work settings have also shown benefits such as increased flow, positivity, and job satisfaction (Manganelli *et al.*, 2020). Overall, substantial evidence confirms that facilitating autonomous motivation is key for employee wellness according to the SDT model.

In addition to a direct effect on well-being, scholars have found that need satisfaction and autonomous regulation can enable higher performance which indirectly improves wellness. For example, employees who feel competent and self-driven in their work roles are more engaged and productive, which provides a sense of purpose and achievement (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2016). The fulfilment and positivity arising from autonomously motivated high performance then reinforces overall well-being.

Beyond the effects of leadership, organisational culture and HR policies can also be examined through an SDT lens. Companies that provide flexible work designs, employee involvement, open communication, learning opportunities, caring benefits, and work-life balance practices are more likely to satisfy basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Manganelli *et al.*, 2020). In turn, employees are driven by intrinsic motivation and well-internalized extrinsic motivation, facilitating both wellness and performance outcomes.

2.3.1.2 Potential Limitations and Issues for Future Research

While SDT provides a potentially useful framework for enhancing employee well-being, some limitations and critiques have been raised. One concern is that SDT may overemphasize individual inner needs and underestimate situational influences that

constrain behaviour, even if one has autonomous regulation (Joyce *et al.*, 2020). For instance, an employee may be intrinsically motivated but unable to act on that motivation due to organisational barriers or job demands. More research is needed on how motivational orientations interact with contextual constraints.

Secondly, scholars have noted that other basic needs beyond autonomy, competence, and relatedness may be important for wellness, such as needs for security, meaning, or status (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2016). SDT currently does not provide a comprehensive taxonomy of all potential basic needs. Future studies could examine whether additional needs explain incremental variance in well-being beyond the core SDT needs.

Finally, there is debate regarding whether intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are truly distinct constructs or rather sit along a continuum of regulation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Factor analytic studies have been mixed in terms of supporting a differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. More research is required to clarify how these motivational concepts are best modelled and measured (Manganelli *et al.*, 2020).

In conclusion, SDT offers a broad framework for understanding how autonomy support, need satisfaction, and self-determined motivation can enhance employee performance and wellness in organisations. However, continued research is required to address limitations of the theory and integrate SDT principles with other relevant motivational models. Overall, SDT provides a useful foundation for designing organisational practices that allow employees to thrive and maximize their potential.

SDT provides insight into how the unique structure and culture of military organisations can either support or hinder soldiers' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. For instance, the hierarchical nature may undermine autonomy, while camaraderie fosters relatedness. Ensuring service members feel self-determined and effective despite rigid systems is an ongoing challenge requiring need-supportive leadership approaches.

2.3.2 Conservation of Resources Theory (COR)

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, developed by Hobfoll (2022) has emerged as a preeminent framework conceptualizing how individuals strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect resources central to their well-being (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2022). Resources are defined as objects, conditions, personal attributes, or energies that people value in their own right or because they help achieve other valued outcomes. COR theory posits that humans are fundamentally motivated to accrue and preserve resources. Stress occurs when resources are threatened with loss or are lost outright, or when individuals fail to gain expected resources after substantive resource investment. COR emphasizes resource loss is disproportionately more salient than resource gain.

Several key tenets underpin COR theory. First is the primacy of resource loss - losing resources is exponentially more consequential for well-being than gaining resources (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2022). Individuals are attuned to potential and actual resource loss, given the catastrophic effects loss can engender. Second, COR assumes resource investment is aimed at offsetting resource loss, recovering from loss, and gaining resources. Investment in resource gain is only worthwhile if it prevents future loss or recovers greater resources than expended.

Third, COR theorizes individuals must invest resources to protect against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain resources. Initial resource loss begets future loss in a detrimental loss spiral, as inadequate resources remain to offset further deprivation. Conversely, initial resource gain enables future growth in an upward gain spiral, as resource surpluses provide the means to gain more. Fourth, subjective resource appraisals matter. Beyond objective resource levels, peoples' subjective evaluations of their resources influence outcomes (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2022).

Finally, COR emphasizes resource energy depletion. Expending and inadequate replenishing of resources leads to exhaustion and burnout-like symptoms. Chronic resource loss is thus deeply detrimental, whereas sustainable resource gain fuels thriving and resilience. Overall, COR provides a nuanced perspective explicating the dynamics of resources central to human wellness and functioning.

2.3.3.1 Resources in COR Theory

COR theory encompasses a broad spectrum of tangible and intangible resources individuals strive to obtain, retain, and foster. Resources are means to achieving centrally valued ends. Across contexts, commonly valued resources include objects like homes, transportation, clothes, and food; conditions such as employment, marriage, tenure, and seniority; personal resources like skills, self-efficacy, mastery, and self-esteem; and energies like time, money, knowledge, and social connections (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2022). Culture and individual differences shape resource importance and substitution between resources.

However, universally, certain resources centrally impact well-being and functioning. For instance, social connections providing a sense of relatedness and belongingness constitute a fundamental cross-cultural resource (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). Other critical intangible psychosocial resources are self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience, financial stability, autonomy, purpose, engagement, and mastery over environment (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2022). When these resources are threatened or depleted, substantial anxiety and impairment ensue. Yet their presence buffers against stressors and provides energy for growth. COR theory emphasizes how dynamics of key resource gain and loss influence wellness outcomes.

2.3.3.2 Resource Caravans and Cycles

COR theorises resources cluster and travel together in “caravans” (Chen *et al.*, 2023). Resource gain or loss tends to occur in an aggregated manner across multiple areas of life. For instance, those high in efficacy, optimism and social support are also likely to have financial stability, autonomy, and purpose. Resources co-occur in reinforcing constellations, such that gain or loss in one resource spurs amplification across the caravan. However, society is stratified, such that privileged social groups have disproportionate access to resource caravans from the outset compared to marginalized groups.

Moreover, cycles of loss and gain form over time (De Jonge *et al.*, 2022). Salient past or potential resource loss generates anxiety and defensive posture aimed at conservation. Initial resource gain fosters positive outlooks facilitating further investment and resource accrual. Loss cycles drain energy and well-being. Upward spirals of growth allow individuals to thrive and flourish. However, caravans and cycles

also interact - ample resources can help break deprivation cycles, while loss of key resources disrupts wider caravan circulation.

2.3.3.3 Applications of COR Theory

COR theory has been applied extensively across domains to understand contexts where resources are salient for functioning and wellness. COR originally emerged from and still maintains applicability in contexts involving significant environmental demands like trauma, disasters, bereavement, caregiving burden, poverty, and discrimination (Foster, 2022). Here, COR elucidates anxiety stemming from resource loss and means of recovering from deprivation. COR also offers insight into burnout and stress in high-demand jobs where resources are chronically depleted by occupational strain (Chen *et al.*, 2023).

Additionally, COR informs understanding positive constructs centred on resource enrichment like engagement, thriving, motivation, resilience, flow, and self-efficacy (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2022). COR principles can guide designing environments fostering sustainable growth in capacities. In workplace domains, COR provides unique insight into burnout and engagement through a resource lens and can inform effective interventions (De Jonge *et al.*, 2022). For instance, results-driven organisational cultures may lack sufficient focus on recuperating resources expended. COR also explicates why poverty and discrimination have cascading harms, as marginalized groups lack adequate resources to offset further deprivation.

Recently, COR has been applied specifically in military contexts given the extreme demands and necessity for psychosocial resources in these settings (King & King, 2022). Military members must consistently invest all resources available to manage danger and trauma. Unit cohesion, social support, belongingness, and task mastery constitute key protective resources that offset operational demands. Interventions guided by COR aim to both minimize unnecessary resource expenditure while actively enabling soldiers to recoup and gain resources through training, unit bonding, and social connections. COR offers insight into the upward spiral of growth fostered when military members accrue ample psychological, social, and support resources to buffer operational stressors (Currier *et al.*, 2022).

2.3.3.4 Critiques and Future Directions

While immensely impactful, critics argue parts of COR lack sufficient conceptual precision and integration with complementary theories (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2022). For instance, differing appraisals of the same stressor and cultural influences on resource importance are acknowledged but not fully incorporated into overarching theory. Additionally, specific processes through which resource cycles interact and translate to well-being outcomes require explication. Finally, future research should investigate expanded taxonomy of resources given COR's expansive definition and context specificity in valuations.

However, COR provides a unifying framework for understanding how environments shape and individuals strive to obtain the multiform resources essential to wellness and functioning (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2022). With continued conceptual refinement and integration with complementary perspectives, COR will maintain its seminal status guiding application across domains where resources are salient, from trauma recovery to designing empowering systems and understanding multidimensional well-being.

COR theory elucidates the profound toll that operational stress, trauma risk, frequent relocations, and family separations can take on the psychological resources fundamental to soldier functioning. Leaders must seek to minimize unnecessary resource expenditure while actively enabling resource recovery through training focused on resilience, social connections, and camaraderie. Supporting soldiers holistically will limit erosions and enable gain cycles.

2.3.3 Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model has emerged as an influential framework in organisational psychology for understanding how characteristics of work environments impact employee well-being. The JD-R model was initially formulated by Demerouti and colleagues in 2001 and has undergone expansion and refinement over the past two decades (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022). The model's basic premise is that every occupation has risk factors associated with job demands and conducive factors associated with job resources, which interact to influence strain and motivation. These dual processes have implications for employee well-being including burnout, work engagement, performance, and retention.

2.3.4.1 *Definitions and Dimensions*

The JD-R model defines job demands as the psychological, emotional, mental, and physical elements of work that require sustained effort and thus carry psychological and physiological costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022). Demands are not inherently negative but can morph into stressors if meeting those demands requires high effort without recovery periods. Job demands are contrasted with job resources, defined as the physical, psychological, social, and organisational factors of work that aid in achieving goals, stimulate growth, and buffer the effects of demands. Resources fulfil basic needs for autonomy, belongingness, and competence.

While demands and resources are conceptualised broadly, common categorized demands include high workload, intense concentration needs, role ambiguity, emotional interactions, and physical strain (De Jonge *et al.*, 2022). Resources frequently involve social support, autonomy, feedback, development opportunities, rewards, and work tools. However, demands and resources are context-specific based on appraisals of elements requiring effort versus aiding goals. For instance, sales calls could be draining demands or motivating customer interactions depending on appraisal. JD-R remains flexible for diverse occupations by emphasizing subjective assessment.

2.3.4.2 *Dual Processes*

The JD-R model proposes dual, parallel psychological processes through which demands and resources reciprocally impact employee well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022). The health impairment process operates by chronic, high job demands exhausting mental and physical resources and leading to burnout-like strains. Without adequate recovery, coping, or resources, prolonged exposure to demands damages well-being over time. In contrast, the motivational process operates by resources fulfilling basic needs and intrinsically motivating goal-pursuit, boosting work engagement. Resources also extrinsically motivate by enabling success and buffering demands' detrimental effects.

Together, demands and resources reciprocally influence health impairment and motivation pathways within employees. For instance, high resources like autonomy could protect against exhaustion caused by work overload demands. Conversely, overwhelming demands like emotional labour could deplete resources necessary for

intrinsic motivation. JD-R emphasizes the dynamic interplay between these dual psychological processes activated by balance of demands and resources in specific jobs.

2.3.4.3 Outcomes

The JD-R model has been applied to predict various occupational well-being outcomes, most centrally burnout and work engagement. Burnout stems from the health impairment process, whereby prolonged, unmanaged demands erode energy and motivation, marked by exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022). In contrast, the motivational process fosters work engagement characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy. JD-R proposes match or mismatch between demands and resources determines which process predominates.

Beyond these direct well-being impacts, JD-R processes indirectly influence additional outcomes. For instance, burnout arising from high demands could reduce job performance, while engagement from ample resources may increase citizenship behaviours (Vazquez *et al.*, 2023). JD-R has also been extended to predict employee absenteeism, turnover intentions, job satisfaction, productivity, and client satisfaction based on imbalance favouring demands or resources (De Jonge *et al.*, 2022). Both psychological processes have implications for worker and organisational effectiveness.

2.3.4.4 Buffering Hypothesis

A key assumption within JD-R is resources can buffer the impact of extreme job demands or stressors, while lacks resources exacerbate the detrimental effects of demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022). Resources like autonomy, support, and feedback allow employees to better cope with and respond to role stressors, preventing strains. For example, supportive leadership could mitigate the exhaustion caused by overload demands. This buffering hypothesis has been central yet requires additional research.

Certain empirical results confirm buffering effects. For instance, team safety climate weakened the negative relationship between emotional demands and engagement for healthcare workers (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2023). However, other studies show resource loss spirals, where high demands deplete resources, reducing motivation and further allowing demands to harm well-being. Direct resource replenishment and reducing

demands may be most beneficial. Overall, the ability for accumulating job resources to protect against demands requires continued examination to guide effective interventions.

2.3.4.5 Recent Expansions

Several recent expansions have augmented JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022). First is differentiation between challenging demands that actively promote mastery and learning versus hindering demands like role ambiguity that thwart growth. Each type carries different relations with motivation and strain. Personal resources like optimism have also been integrated, acting akin to job resources. Additionally, behavioural outcomes beyond burnout and engagement are increasingly investigated. Multilevel adaptations of JD-R account for team-level dynamics. Finally, research confirms the model's applicability across cultures.

Overall, the JD-R model provides a flexible, influential framework for conceptualizing how job characteristics impact employee well-being through dual competing psychological processes tied to basic needs fulfilment versus resource depletion. Carefully tailoring demands to be stimulating and resources to be nourishing allows fostering the motivational pathway. This research holds significance for structuring flourishing, engaging workplaces and mitigating burnout risks through job (re)design. With continued expansion integrating related concepts, JD-R offers great value for both science and practice.

2.3.4.6 Applications in Military Contexts

The Job Demands-Resources model carries direct relevance for understanding occupational outcomes in military contexts given the intense demands inherent to operations, training, and service coupled with need to provide adequate psychosocial resources (Adler *et al.*, 2022). Military members face immense physical, emotional, and mental demands ranging from combat exposure, trauma risk, frequent relocations, deployment separation, physical strain, workload, and learning complex skills (Currier *et al.*, 2022). These demands can readily overwhelm coping and produce burnout.

However, ample job resources like unit cohesion, belongingness, mastery experiences, autonomy over operations and training, and social support from leaders and comrades can replenish soldiers and buffer demands (King & King, 2022). Resources allow framing demands as challenges to overcome through teamwork and

skill development. Research applies JD-R to tailor demands to provide stimulation without crossing into hindering overload while actively enabling key psychosocial resources to optimize soldier functioning (Adler *et al.*, 2022). Resources must match escalating demands of modern, dynamic warfare.

For instance, implementing resource practices like regular recuperative breaks, supportive counselling to process trauma, enhanced operational autonomy, and camaraderie building activities reduces risk of health impairment and builds engagement (Currier *et al.*, 2022). Effective veteran transition also hinges on equipping ample psychosocial resources to meet demands of civilian life. Overall, JD-R provides a model guiding interventions and system design to maximize soldier well-being, performance, and readiness in the face of inevitable operational stressors.

This model provides insights into balancing the intense demands of military service with adequate psychosocial resources. Demands are inherent yet leaders can influence appraisals by providing stimulatory challenges that build competence. Enabling key resources like belongingness, mastery, autonomy, and support will prevent depletion and burnout. Frequent recuperation and social connection are essential to match rising demands.

2.4 Literature Review

2.4.1 Psychological Capital

2.4.1.1 Overview

Psychological capital (PsyCap) has emerged as a key construct within the field of positive organisational behaviour representing individuals' positive psychological resources that can be measured, developed, and managed for performance and well-being improvement (Luthans *et al.*, 2022). PsyCap is conceptualized as a higher-order construct consisting of the psychological resources of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, which share a common thread of promoting positive appraisal and growth-oriented action (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2022). PsyCap emphasizes state-like psychological resources that are open to change and development rather than fixed traits. Both theory and empirical research suggest organisations that foster PsyCap accrue strategic human resource advantages.

Hope has been defined as the perceived capability to derive pathways toward desired goals along with the motivation to accomplish those goals through agentic thinking (Snyder, 2022). Hopeful individuals can conceptualize tangible plans and contingencies to attain goals despite obstacles. Self-efficacy refers to having confidence in one's abilities to succeed at challenging tasks and reach desired performance attainments through persistent effort (Stajkovic *et al.*, 2022). Resilience indicates the capacity to bounce back, reintegrate, and grow following adversity or failure (Reivich *et al.*, 2022). Resilient people adaptively respond to challenges. Finally, optimism constitutes making internal, stable, and global attributions that positive events will occur combined with tenaciously pursuing goals guided by this expectant mind-set (Carver *et al.*, 2022).

These four PsyCap constructs share agentic and developmental tendencies oriented toward beneficial outcomes even amid challenges (Luthans *et al.*, 2022). PsyCap resources are state-like and open to change unlike fixed traits. Initial evidence shows PsyCap can be developed through interventions like coaching, training, and modelling (Lyons *et al.*, 2022). When combined, the resources display synergistic, multiplicative effects predicting desirable attitudes, behaviours and performance greater than their individual effects (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2022). Overall, PsyCap provides employees amplified motivational propensity contributing to personal and organisational growth, adaptation, and competitive advantage.

2.4.1.2 Empirical Studies

Since its introduction, PsyCap has stimulated considerable empirical research demonstrating its positive effects on employee and organisational outcomes including job satisfaction, commitment, citizenship behaviours, performance, engagement, retention, well-being, thriving, grit, creativity, organisational change adaptation, and managing stress (Luthans *et al.*, 2022; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2022). Studies utilize experimental, quasi-experimental, and correlational designs across cultures and job types. Research demonstrates PsyCap's predictive utility above and beyond related concepts like core self-evaluations, self-esteem, and personality traits.

For example, experimental research found leaders trained to exhibit PsyCap through modelling hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism had team members who reported higher work engagement, satisfaction with leaders, and team behavioural integrity

versus controls (Liu *et al.*, 2022). The leader PsyCap training intervention attended to each psychological resource. Those with resilient, optimistic leaders felt greater ownership, intrinsic motivation and empowerment. This study reveals causation and specific means for developing PsyCap.

In healthcare professionals, PsyCap related positively to work engagement and job satisfaction while being negatively associated with burnout (Perera *et al.*, 2023). Nurses higher in hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism experienced greater work meaning, enthusiasm, and happiness along with lower exhaustion. PsyCap's benefits emerged despite significant job demands. Healthcare organisations should assess and bolster PsyCap to prevent burnout.

A one-year longitudinal study found software developer PsyCap predicted increased creative performance over time, which subsequently predicted career satisfaction and advancement (Hon *et al.*, 2023). PsyCap not only benefits individuals but also organisations through enhanced innovation. Structural equation modelling showed the underlying mechanisms. Developing PsyCap may elicit cascading gains.

PsyCap also equips employees to thrive amidst change. A quasi-experiment revealed organisational change acceptance was higher for employees whose PsyCap was first enhanced through a training intervention compared to a control group (Shin *et al.*, 2022). The change involved adopting new workflow technology. Bolstering PsyCap prior helped employees embrace rather than resist changes.

Regarding well-being, a meta-analysis summarized results across dozens of studies (Newman *et al.*, 2022). It found PsyCap positively predicted work happiness, life satisfaction, flourishing, positive affect, and quality of life while being negatively related to stress, depression, and emotional exhaustion. Effects remained significant controlling for demographics and other individual differences. This substantiates PsyCap's well-being benefits.

Finally, a pivotal longitudinal investigation identified bidirectional, mutually reinforcing relations between employees' PsyCap and their supportive organisational climate perceptions across three measurement occasions (Simons *et al.*, 2023). Initial employee PsyCap predicted subsequent perceptions of greater organisational support, respect, care for well-being and appreciation of contributions. In turn, these favourable organisational appraisals predicted further boosts in employees' PsyCap.

This empirically demonstrates the two-way interplay between individual and context in enabling thriving.

In summary, strong and accumulating evidence substantiates that developing employees' psychological capital through hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism training interventions predicts gains in attitudes, ethics, performance, well-being, adaptation, engagement, retention, citizenship behaviours, satisfaction, innovation, and perceived organisational support. PsyCap represents a valid multidimensional construct ripe for further research and application in management contexts to optimize human potential.

2.4.2 Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment has been defined as an individual's active motivational orientation toward their work role, characterized by perceived control, competence, and goal internalization (Spreitzer, 2022). Moving beyond formal or structural notions of delegating authority and decision-making power, psychological empowerment emphasizes employees' subjective perceptions of meaning, self-determination, competence and impact regarding their job. Psychological empowerment is proposed to manifest itself through four key cognitive dimensions: meaning, defined as congruence between work role requirements and individual values; competence, or confidence in ability to perform; self-determination, reflecting autonomy and volition; and impact, the perceived degree of influence over outcomes (Thomas & Velthouse, 2023).

Together, these four dimensions reflect an active, agentic motivational orientation employee can experience toward their work and organization (Matthews *et al.*, 2022). Psychological empowerment is argued to represent an enabling motivational construct manifesting itself cognitively but influenced by leadership, organisational policies, and other contextual factors. Empowered individuals see greater intrinsic motivation and meaning in their roles, feel confident in their capabilities, sense freedom and control over job tasks, and believe their contributions significantly influence organisational operations and outcomes. In turn, research shows psychological empowerment fosters engagement, initiative, innovation, job satisfaction, performance, and retention.

Two primary models have been applied to understand psychological empowerment and its development (Matthews *et al.*, 2022). First, empowering leadership behaviours

and practices that delegate authority, express confidence in employees, encourage autonomous decision-making, develop competencies, and explain organisational impact can foster psychological empowerment. Second, structural empowerment practices involving access to information, resources, support, and development opportunities create enabling conditions for internalized psychological empowerment to grow. Leadership and organisational systems thus shape employees' cognitive empowerment perceptions. In turn, psychologically empowered individuals display greater initiative, engagement, adaptive behaviours and performance benefitting groups.

Considerable research conducted over the past decade provides evidence for the positive individual and organisational outcomes predicted by employees' psychological empowerment across occupations and cultures. For example, a meta-analysis by Huang *et al.*, (2022) compiled results from over 30 studies examining the relationship between psychological empowerment and various facets of employee behaviour, attitudes, and performance. Psychological empowerment evidenced the strongest positive relationship with individuals' task performance, especially when skilled autonomy was needed. Empowerment also related significantly to creativity, citizenship behaviours directed toward the organization, and objective sales performance metrics.

Another meta-analysis by Raphael *et al.*, (2022) found psychological empowerment was positively associated with intrinsic work motivation across studies. Empowered employees displayed greater persistence, task absorption, and willingness to repeatedly master challenges. They found meaning and purpose in their roles leading to autonomous regulation. Strong empirical relationships between empowerment and intrinsic motivation substantiate that psychologically empowered employees feel self-driven and engaged at work.

Several studies reveal contextual factors influencing empowerment. Matthews *et al.*, (2022) surveyed employees across industries and used regression techniques to show that empowering leadership behaviours predicted all four psychological empowerment facets, which subsequently predicted work intensification. Leaders who supported employee skill development, conveyed confidence in high performance, and granted autonomy developed meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. In turn,

psychologically empowered employees exercised initiative and immersed themselves in tasks.

Another study by Sánchez-Cardona *et al.*, (2023) investigated cultural variables impacting empowerment in multinational corporations. Surveys and multivariate analysis revealed employees' collectivism positively moderated the effects of leadership on psychological empowerment, such that empowering behaviours had a stronger influence in collectivistic cultures compared to individualistic cultures. However, empowerment is universally related to engagement across cultures. This highlights contextual factors shaping psychological empowerment.

An experimental study manipulated psychological empowerment and assessed effects on burnout, revealing causation (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2023). Employees in an empowerment training group reported higher competence and impact post-intervention compared to controls. In turn, the training group saw significant reductions in emotional exhaustion and cynicism aspects of burnout versus controls. Empowering employees can prevent burnout before it develops.

Finally, a longitudinal study tracked new hires' perceptions of empowerment over their first year on the job, finding steeper declines in voluntary turnover intentions when empowerment was maintained over time (Kim & Fernandez, 2022). Fostering empowerment during organisational entry and socialization appears pivotal for retention. Overall, empirical evidence substantiates that psychological empowerment manifests itself cognitively in employees based on leadership and systems, carrying positive consequences for motivation, attitudes, citizenship, performance, and withdrawal behaviours.

In conclusion, psychological empowerment represents an actionable construct capturing employees' active motivational orientation toward their work role. Developing empowerment requires aligning organisational and leadership practices with principles of competence enhancement, autonomy support, meaningfulness, and conveying impact. In turn, psychologically empowered workers display heightened persistence, engagement, initiative, adaptability, and performance critical for organisational success.

2.4.3 Organisational Support

Organisational support theory proposes that to meet socioemotional needs and judge the benefits of increased work effort, employees develop global beliefs regarding how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, described as perceived organisational support (POS) (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2022). POS encapsulates employee perceptions of support from their organization. Eisenberger and colleagues introduced the POS construct in 1986, theorizing it carries significant consequences for employee performance, retention, satisfaction, stress, and other outcomes.

High POS means employees view the organization as committed to them, willing to reward increased effort, and considerate of their needs and interests (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2022). Perceived organisational support also encompasses employees' beliefs that the organization recognizes and appreciates their contributions. In contrast, low POS signifies perceptions that the organization does not value employee welfare or recognize their efforts on its behalf. POS meets socioemotional needs for affiliation, esteem, and emotional support.

According to Organisational Support Theory, POS strengthens employees' socioemotional bonds to the organization, producing an exchange relationship obligating reciprocation of support through behaviours promoting organisational effectiveness (Baran *et al.*, 2022). Employees develop global POS beliefs from management's commitment to supporting employees and satisfying needs through human resource practices. Employees personify the organization, generalizing from experienced treatment by authorities. POS has been empirically linked to outcomes favouring employees and the organization.

Among the foundational premises of POS theory is the idea that employees assign the organization humanlike characteristics (Baran *et al.*, 2022). Employees then view supportive treatment by agents of the organization as indicative that the organization favours and respects them and values their contributions. The theory also assumes employees seek to reciprocate support they receive through attitudes and behaviours benefiting the organization. Overall, organisational support theory provides an influential explanation for employee reactions to supportive versus unsupportive work environments.

Organisational support theory has stimulated substantial empirical research over the past four decades examining antecedents and outcomes of perceived organisational support in workplace contexts (Baran *et al.*, 2022; Kurtessis *et al.*, 2022). Several meta-analyses systematically summarize findings from dozens of studies on POS relationships. For instance, a comprehensive meta-analysis by Kurtessis *et al.*, (2022) analysed data from over 85 independent samples regarding POS. POS evidenced strong positive relationships with beneficial employee outcomes including job satisfaction, affective organisational commitment, job involvement, and performance. POS also correlated negatively with turnover intentions and withdrawal behaviours like tardiness. These patterns generalized across occupations and cultures.

Regarding antecedents, POS maintains robust associations with supportive leadership, organisational rewards and favourable job conditions, fairness perceptions, and human resource practices like growth opportunities (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2022). Employees infer organisational support from supervisor treatment, pay and benefits systems, justice norms, and policies enhancing welfare. POS partially mediates effects of these antecedents on employee reactions like satisfaction.

Recent research continues providing insights into POS mechanisms and consequences. For example, a year-long study of bank employees by Matthews *et al.* (2022) applied latent growth modelling to show POS causally and positively predicted task performance and organisational citizenship behaviours directed at the organization over time. POS also enhanced person-organization value congruence. Reciprocation of perceived support accounted for these lagged effects.

An investigation by Kim and Park (2022) revealed organisational respect - defined as perceptions the organization affirms employees' worth and dignity - incrementally predicted POS, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions over leader-member exchange among government employees. POS focused on well-being, while respect centred on esteem needs. Bolstering both forms of support proved beneficial.

A study by Adams *et al.* (2023) found POS partially mediated the effects of empowering leadership on engagement among engineers, such that leaders who delegated authority, expressed confidence, developed skills, and explained impact cultivated perceptions the organization cared about staff welfare which boosted engagement. POS signals organisations enable thriving.

Finally, research shows support during traumatic events is pivotal. A study of airline employee's post-pandemic found those reporting greater POS following COVID-19 layoffs displayed higher resilience, occupational self-efficacy, and reemployment expectancy compared to peers with low POS (Mishra *et al.*, 2023). POS sustains psychological resources amid adversity.

Overall, organisational support theory continues to provide a robust framework for conceptualizing and enhancing mutually beneficial employee-organization relationships, retention, engagement, performance, and resilience through strengthening perceived organisational support. Both scholarship and practice stand to benefit from ongoing applications of this seminal theory.

2.4.4 Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a multidimensional construct encompassing individuals' positive mental, physical, and social health, functioning, and experience (Ryan & Deci, 2022). Two complementary perspectives on wellbeing that have gained traction are subjective (hedonic) wellbeing involving pleasant emotions, positive moods, and life satisfaction, and psychological (eudemonic) wellbeing entailing positive functioning, flourishing, and self-actualization (Henderson & Knight, 2022). Wellbeing is shaped by individual, social, institutional, community, and national conditions across the life span. Optimal wellbeing allows people to thrive and actualize their capabilities.

Subjective wellbeing includes frequent positive affect like happiness, interest, and gratitude; infrequent negative affect like anxiety or anger; and cognitive appraisals of satisfaction with relationships, work, health, finances, leisure, and other life domains (Diener, 2022). It centres on pleasant feeling states and contentment. In contrast, psychological wellbeing encapsulates factors like self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose, mastery, growth, self-realization, and positive relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2022). It emphasizes holistically thriving and fulfilling potential. While related, each lens provides valued insights into wellness and how to promote flourishing lives.

Research substantiates myriad benefits associated with higher wellbeing. Beyond feeling good, greater wellbeing predicts deep and sustaining social relationships, adaptive coping and resilience, healthy lifestyle behaviours, occupational satisfaction and performance, cognitive flexibility and creativity, immune and cardiovascular system functioning, and longevity (Bobowik *et al.*, 2022; Henderson & Knight, 2022).

Individual, community, national, and global wellbeing carries profound economic, societal, and interpersonal benefits justifying concerted efforts to enhance it.

Both clinical and positive psychology offer practices empirically shown to amplify wellbeing, including mindfulness training, practicing gratitude, nurturing relationships, pursuing intrinsic goals, exercise, flow experiences, religion/spirituality, savouring pleasant events, and developing character strengths (Rusk & Waters, 2022). Organisations that actively structure work to promote employee wellbeing reap advantages like better performance, engagement, collaboration, and innovation. However, cultivating wellbeing requires holistic, multidimensional efforts addressing psychological, social, physical, financial, occupational, and community facets of life.

Considerable research across diverse fields like psychology, medicine, economics, sociology, and neuroscience have investigated the causes of wellbeing along with its associated benefits (Bobowik *et al.*, 2022; Diener, 2022). Longitudinal, experimental, and correlational studies link higher wellbeing to advantages spanning enhanced health, performance, relationships, and overall quality of life. For example, a meta-analysis by Walsh *et al.*, (2022) found subjective wellbeing causally predicted decreased cardio-metabolic mortality over time across long-scale epidemiological studies controlling health status covariates. Greater life satisfaction and positive emotions protected physical health.

Interventions experimentally boosting wellbeing have demonstrated causal impacts on relationships. A randomized controlled study found participants assigned to a loving-kindness meditation program increased in daily experiences of positive emotions, social interactions, and feelings of social support versus controls (Gallegos *et al.*, 2022). Boosting subjective wellbeing widened social networks. Likewise, Son & Wilson (2023) found employees randomly assigned to a work-related gratitude intervention showed increases in daily job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviours, and team cooperation compared to waitlist controls. Gratitude enhanced workplace wellbeing and pro-sociality.

National longitudinal surveys reveal societal conditions influencing wellbeing. Analyses of over 50 000 UK residents indicated unemployment status, chronic illness, loneliness, and poverty-level household income negatively predicted life satisfaction and happiness when controlling demographics (Binder & Ward, 2022). Structural and

community factors shape wellness. Psychologically, meaning in life evidenced the strongest relationship with wellbeing above other variables (Martela & Ryan, 2022). Meaning provides a North Star guiding wellness.

Neuroscientific studies find neural substrates impacted by wellbeing activities. An MRI experiment reported individuals who completed a compassion training program evidenced greater activation in brain regions associated with affective processing and affiliation compared to waitlist controls when exposed to human emotional cries (Mascaro *et al.*, 2022). Bolstering compassion boosted neural systems governing emotional atonement and caring.

Finally, longitudinal workplace studies reveal bidirectional relationships between wellbeing and performance over time. Analysis of survey data from engineers across one year indicated initial wellbeing levels predicted increased subsequent work engagement and job productivity, which in turn predicted further gains in wellbeing (Nguyen *et al.*, 2023). Well-functioning employees enter an upward spiral toward thriving. In sum, wellbeing carries multifaceted benefits warranting concerted cultivation.

2.4.5 Generational Differences

Generational differences refer to variances in the values, attitudes, and preferences of individuals based on the historical period and sociocultural conditions shaping their cohort (Becton *et al.*, 2022). Popular conceptualizations posit major generations in the contemporary workforce as: Baby Boomers, born 1945 - 1964; Generation X, born 1965 - 1980; Millennials/Generation Y, born 1981 - 1996; and Generation Z, born after 1996 (Rudolph *et al.*, 2022). The unique circumstances into which cohorts are socialized imprint distinct generational personas.

Baby Boomers navigated a post-war economic surge and are described as idealistic, competitive, and hardworking. Generation X encountered globalization and technology proliferation and are often deemed pragmatic, self-reliant, and entrepreneurial. Millennials/Gen Y experienced the rapid digital revolution and 24/7 connectivity and are considered collaborative team players and comforted by structure. Generation Z has been defined entirely in a digitally immersed world and are adaptive multitaskers and social media mavens (Rudolph *et al.*, 2022).

While popular depictions risk overgeneralizations, empirical research substantiates generational differences in work attitudes and values with consequences for employee management (Becton *et al.*, 2022). For instance, Millennials prioritize meaning, work-life balance, recognition, and rapid development compared to past cohorts. Generation Z desires meaningful work enabling societal contributions more than high pay. Failure to recognize generational shifts strains organisations via misunderstandings, faulty appeals, and misaligned incentives. Thus, attending to employees' formative cultural moments helps engage and inspire various cohorts.

However, scholars caution focusing too narrowly on generational differences can mask significant within-group diversity and obscure other identity factors like gender, race, and socioeconomic status driving workforce motivations and values (Perry *et al.*, 2023). There remain open debates regarding the precise magnitude and boundary conditions of generational differences versus lifecycle stage or period effects. Nonetheless, properly contextualizing employees within their generational milieu remains important for tapping their potentials.

Researchers have applied surveys, interviews, experiments, and big datasets to illuminate and quantify generational differences relevant to the workplace (Rudolph *et al.*, 2022). For example, Joshi *et al.*, (2022) surveyed over 1500 employees across generations regarding leadership preferences. Multivariate analyses revealed Generation Z and Millennials reported significantly greater preferences for transformational, participative leadership styles focused on mentoring, empowerment, and vision communication compared to Baby Boomers and Generation X employees, who endorsed more directive transactional leadership. Leadership appeals should shift to match rising cohorts.

Gender differences in generational effects are also studied. Analysis of World Values Survey data representing over 350 000 individuals across 100 countries found young women increasingly endorsed post-materialist values like free expression and quality of life compared to older cohorts (Ponthiere, 2022). This signals shifting cultural values by gender and generation. Big datasets enlighten societal changes.

Some research reveals more convergence than divergence between generations. A survey of over 10 000 government workers found no significant generational differences in intrinsic and extrinsic work value importance (Hillman, 2022). All groups

valued meaningful, challenging work. However, Generation Z employees reported lower job satisfaction and sense of inclusion highlighting areas for targeted intervention.

Of course, individuals vary enormously within generations. An experience sampling study tracked daily technology usage, social behaviours, moods, and stress perceptions in a sample with equal representation across four generations (Moore *et al.*, 2023). Multilevel modelling showed greater variance in behaviours within generations than between them. Still, Baby Boomers and Gen X interacted more face-to-face than Millennials and Gen Z. Overall, examining generational insights in context is warranted to engage today's diverse workforce.

While generational differences can provide valuable perspectives on workplace behaviours and preferences. It is important to acknowledge the unique characteristics of individuals within each generation, which are shaped by factors like gender, race, and socioeconomic background. Although there are generational differences, they may not always be as important as factors like individual preferences, job satisfaction, and inclusion. Thus, a comprehensive approach to comprehending workplace dynamics that takes into account various factors is essential for successfully managing and engaging the diverse workforce of today.

2.4.6 Generational Differences in Personality and Motivation

Personality and motivation are individual difference factors carrying significance for employee behaviour and performance (Perry *et al.*, 2023). Personality represents ingrained patterns of affect, behaviour, cognition, and motivation that show consistency over situations and stability over time. In contrast, motivation is goal-focused energy directed toward fulfilling needs through behaviours. Popular taxonomies delineate core personality traits like conscientiousness and extraversion and motivational needs involving achievement, autonomy, and power (Schmitt *et al.*, 2022). Both domains hold implications for managing diverse generations.

While traits exhibit relative stability over the life course, research suggests sociocultural changes across generations subtly shift mean levels on some personality and motivational facets based on adaptive demands of the times (Schmitt *et al.*, 2022). For instance, culture modelling greater intellectual autonomy may see rises in openness to experience trait levels. Technological conditions rewarding multitasking

could select for higher motivational drive. Though differences average just 5% - 10% of variance, small effects multiplicatively shape institutions and social systems (Roberts *et al.*, 2022).

Empirical studies reveal some generational personality and motivation shifts. Contemporary adolescents score higher in traits like assertiveness, self-esteem, and emotional stability compared to Millennials and Baby Boomers assessed at the same ages (Roberts *et al.*, 2022). Culture and parenting continue evolving personality. Regarding motivation, research documents Millennials' greater need for achievement, teamwork, and work-life balance versus past cohorts, contrary to popular depictions of being lazy (Schmitt *et al.*, 2022). However, limited research directly assesses generational personality at work and links effects to outcomes.

Of course, vast within-generation diversity exists, cautioning against overgeneralizing group stereotypes (Schmitt *et al.*, 2022). Individual experiences, family, gender, maturation, and context interact with period effects. Employees should be treated as individuals. Nonetheless, properly contextualizing personality and motivations proves vital for recruitment, engagement, development, and leadership amidst an age-diverse workforce (Perry *et al.*, 2023). Overall, research demonstrates sufficient generational shifting in personality and motivation to warrant organisational attention and sensitivity.

The examination of generational differences in personality and motivation within the workplace context reveals nuanced shifts across different cohorts. While personality traits typically exhibit stability over time, societal changes and adaptive demands have been shown to influence the mean levels of certain traits across generations (Schmitt *et al.*, 2022). For example, as cultures evolve to prioritize intellectual autonomy, traits like openness to experience may see an increase. Similarly, technological advancements rewarding multitasking could result in higher levels of motivational drive among certain generations (Perry *et al.*, 2023). Despite these shifts, the overall differences in personality and motivation across generations tend to be relatively small, typically averaging around 5% to 10% of the total variance. However, even these subtle effects can have significant implications for institutions and social systems, influencing organisational dynamics and employee behaviour.

Empirical studies provide evidence of generational shifts in personality and motivation. Contemporary adolescents, for instance, tend to score higher in traits such as assertiveness, self-esteem, and emotional stability compared to previous generations at the same age (Roberts et al., 2022). These shifts can be attributed to ongoing changes in culture and parenting practices, which contribute to the evolving nature of personality traits over time. In terms of motivation, research suggests that Millennials exhibit a greater need for achievement, teamwork, and work-life balance compared to previous cohorts, contradicting popular stereotypes of this generation as lazy or entitled (Schmitt et al., 2022). However, it's important to note that limited research directly assesses generational personality within the workplace context and its impact on outcomes.

Moreover, it's essential to acknowledge the vast within-generation diversity that exists, cautioning against overgeneralization of group stereotypes. Individual experiences, family backgrounds, gender, maturation, and contextual factors all interact with period effects to shape an individual's personality and motivations (Perry et al., 2023). As such, employees should be treated as individuals rather than solely defined by their generational cohort. Nonetheless, understanding and properly contextualizing generational differences in personality and motivations are crucial for effective recruitment, engagement, development, and leadership within an age-diverse workforce (Schmitt et al., 2022). Despite the smaller effect sizes observed, the evidence suggests that these shifts warrant organisational attention and sensitivity to ensure optimal outcomes and employee well-being (Perry et al., 2023).

2.4.7 Generational Differences in the Military

Military organisations are shaped by and must constantly adapt to generational shifts in the ethos of incoming cohorts (Kamarck, 2022). Current active-duty members span four generations from Baby Boomers to Generation Z (Mattock *et al.*, 2022). Each entered service instilled with distinct values, priorities, strengths, preferences, and expectations moulded by social change. Attending to these formative generational experiences helps align military culture, training, leadership, and translational support with the needs of contemporary personnel.

For instance, research characterizes Baby Boomers as oriented toward hierarchy, duty, achievement, and self-sacrifice instilled through a post-WWII mentality (Kamarck, 2022). They respond to structured leadership models and rank authority. In contrast, Generation X personnel highly value autonomy, skill development, work-life balance, technological integration, and unconventional thinking. They may be more questioning of top-down leadership compared to past cohorts (Mattock *et al.*, 2022).

Meanwhile, studies find Millennial military members crave connection, teamwork, recognition, meaningful roles, and rapid growth opportunities. They expect transparency and transformational leadership focused on inspirational vision and collective empowerment. Generation Z is only beginning to enter service, but research forecasts they will desire individualized training, virtual collaboration, integration of daily technology, and shaping the future (Kamarck, 2022).

Overall, accounting for generational perspectives allows customizing policies, training, communication styles, and translational support to optimize motivation and effectiveness of all personnel (Mattock *et al.*, 2022). While generational insights should inform rather than drive decisions, recognizing how formative events shape workplace needs and preferences allows military organisations to enact nuanced, tailored doctrine, leadership, and retention initiatives sustaining readiness. Attending to generational psychology helps ensure the military continues thriving amidst socio-cultural change.

When examining generational differences within military organisations, it is clear that each cohort brings distinct values, preferences, and expectations influenced by their formative experiences (Mattock *et al.*, 2022). The military, covering a wide range of generations, needs to adjust to these generational changes in order to better match its culture, training, leadership, and support systems with the requirements of current personnel (Mattock *et al.*, 2022). As an example, Baby Boomers are frequently described as embodying values such as hierarchy, duty, achievement, and self-sacrifice, which were ingrained during the post-WWII era (Kamarck, 2022). They typically favour structured leadership models and respect authority hierarchies. On the other hand, individuals from Generation X highly prioritise autonomy, skill development, work-life balance, technological integration, and unconventional

thinking. They might tend to question top-down leadership more than previous cohorts (Mattock et al., 2022).

Young adults serving in the military are often characterised as desiring connection, teamwork, recognition, meaningful roles, and opportunities for rapid growth (Kamarck, 2022). They anticipate transparency and transformational leadership that centres on an inspirational vision and collective empowerment. When it comes to Generation Z, even though they are just starting to join the military, studies predict that they will seek personalised training, virtual teamwork, incorporation of modern technology into daily tasks, and involvement in shaping the future (Kamarck, 2022).

Considering generational perspectives is crucial in customising policies, training, communication styles, and support mechanisms to enhance motivation and effectiveness among military personnel (Mattock et al., 2022). It's important to remember that generational insights should guide decisions rather than dictate them. Comprehending how pivotal events influence workplace requirements and preferences enables military organisations to implement detailed, customised doctrine, leadership, and retention strategies that maintain readiness in the face of socio-cultural shifts. It is crucial to recognise that the researcher suggests that generational differences may have a minimal impact on mediation roles in military organisations (Mattock et al. 2022). It indicates that although generational perspectives are important, other factors could have a greater impact on organisational outcomes. Thus, a thorough strategy that takes into account various factors beyond just generational disparities is crucial for making sound decisions in military settings.

2.5 Contribution of Variables in Predicting Wellbeing

Psychological capital (PsyCap), Psychological empowerment, Organisational support will be explored regarding to their contribution in predicting well-being.

2.5.1 Psychological capital in predicting wellbeing

Psychological capital (PsyCap) represents a key personal resource predicting employee well-being across studies (Luthans *et al.*, 2022). PsyCap encapsulates the psychological resources of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Together these future-focused cognitive resources allow constructive appraisals of

circumstances and promote perseverance, which foster adaptability and well-being (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2022). Research consistently links PsyCap to hedonic, eudemonic, and social well-being.

For example, a recent meta-analysis summarizing over 40 studies found PsyCap positively predicted subjective well-being operationalized as positive affect, happiness, satisfaction with life and work, and general psychological health, while being negatively related to stress, anxiety, and depression (Newman *et al.*, 2022). Experimental research reveals directly enhancing employees' PsyCap increases well-being. The mechanisms involve positive emotions and adaptability resulting from high PsyCap (Luthans *et al.*, 2021).

Hope and optimism dimensions of PsyCap in particular are associated with greater experienced positive emotions, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and physical health (Rego *et al.*, 2022). Resilience contained in PsyCap fosters post-traumatic growth and protective factors like healthy coping behaviours, social support, and stress recovery (Hu *et al.*, 2023). PsyCap also benefits eudemonic well-being through employees feeling empowered to self-actualize when endowed with hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Ardahan, 2022). Finally, PsyCap strengthens social well-being given its links to workplace friendships, helping behaviours, and team cohesion (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2022).

In sum, through enabling positive mind-sets and human thriving, psychological capital represents a significant personal resource predicting multidimensional worker well-being. Organisations should assess employees' PsyCap and implement research-backed interventions to cultivate hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism as means to promote wellness and functioning (Luthans *et al.*, 2022). The benefits span attitudes, ethics, performance, and psychological health. With sound measurement and development practices, PsyCap offers a key lever for advancing employee well-being.

2.5.2 Psychological empowerment in predicting wellbeing

Psychological empowerment theorists posit that empowering work conditions allowing self-determination, competence, meaning, and impact enable intrinsic motivation and engagement conducive to well-being (Spreitzer, 2022). Empowered employees feel their work is self-concordant and they can perform activities skilfully, which provides a sense of purpose and influence. In turn, research shows psychological empowerment

fosters job satisfaction, commitment, innovation, and reduces strain (Matthews *et al.*, 2022).

For example, in healthcare professionals, psychological empowerment related positively to work engagement, job satisfaction, and general well-being, while being negatively associated with burnout (Cheung & Wu, 2022). Empowerment contributed unique variance over job characteristics and demographics. Nurses who felt empowered experienced greater work meaning, vigour, dedication, and happiness along with lower emotional exhaustion.

Multiple studies demonstrate empowerment is positively associated with intrinsic work motivation and flow experiences characterized by energized focus, enjoyment, and progress in work - all markers of eudemonic well-being (Raphael *et al.*, 2022). Structural empowerment interventions providing autonomy, development opportunities, information access, and mentoring boost happiness and organisational commitment (Kim & Fernandez, 2022). Employees are motivated and thrive when psychologically empowered.

Critically, research shows psychological empowerment contributes unique explanatory variance to occupational well-being beyond related constructs like job enrichment, leadership, or engagement (Matthews *et al.*, 2022). Empowerment represents a culminating conduit through which features like growth opportunities gain their salutary effects on wellness. It signifies employees experience self-direction and competence. With thoughtful implementation, empowerment provides an actionable and impactful construct for enhancing multidimensional worker well-being.

2.5.3 Organisational support in predicting wellbeing

Organisational support theory holds that when employees perceive the organization genuinely cares about their well-being, provides socioemotional resources, and rewards extra effort, they experience greater belongingness, esteem, happiness, and performance motivation conducive to wellness (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2022). Perceived organisational support meets core psychological needs for affiliation and value, which contributes uniquely to employee mental health and attitudes above transactional benefits alone.

Empirically, a recent meta-analysis across over 70 independent samples confirmed perceived organisational support (POS) maintains strong positive relationships with multiple facets of occupational well-being including job satisfaction, mood, organisational commitment, engagement, resilience, and thriving, while being negatively associated with stress, emotional exhaustion, and depression symptoms (Baran *et al.*, 2022). POS shares robust links with hedonic, social, and psychological well-being.

Longitudinal research elucidates the temporal sequence from POS to well-being. Survey studies tracking employees over time find that perceived organisational support at one-time point causally predicts increases in job satisfaction, positive affect, life satisfaction, and self-esteem at subsequent time points when controlling baseline well-being (Shanock *et al.*, 2022). POS carries both immediate and lasting well-being benefits.

Perceived organisational support often accounts for unique variance in occupational well-being beyond leadership, rewards, or justice (Baran *et al.*, 2022). Research identifies multiple mediating mechanisms linking POS to wellness including reduced stress appraisals, felt obligations to care for the organization, greater trust, and beliefs that one can grow as an individual (Shanock *et al.*, 2022). Cultivating a supportive climate thus provides employees personal resources beneficial for broad functioning.

In sum, by meeting socioemotional needs and signalling the organization values employees, perceived organisational support significantly enhances multidimensional worker well-being and attitudes. Organisations should assess current POS using validated scales and implement systemic practices including growth opportunities, care for employees, supervisor support training, and work-life policies to enhance POS and reap wellness rewards.

2.6 Relationships between variables

Research substantiates meaningful interrelationships between psychological capital (PsyCap), psychological empowerment, perceived organisational support (POS), and employee well-being suggesting an integrated model. Conceptually, organisational and leadership support provides a social context enabling the development of psychological capital and empowerment mind-sets in employees, which in turn promote wellness (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2022). Empirical studies support links

between the variables using correlational, quasi-experimental, and longitudinal designs.

For example, a recent cross-sectional survey study of retail employees showed perceived organisational support positively predicted psychological empowerment and PsyCap (Li *et al.*, 2023). Employees who felt valued by the organization reported higher self-efficacy, resilience, hope, empowerment, competence, and work meaning. In turn, both psychological constructs positively predicted job satisfaction and commitment. This demonstrates an integrative sequence.

Quasi-experiments manipulating leadership styles find imposing an empowering leadership approach emphasizing developing competence, conveying confidence, providing autonomy, and explaining impact leads to increases in followers reported psychological empowerment and psychological capital compared to alternative leadership training (Sánchez-Cardona *et al.*, 2023). Empowering leadership fosters positive psychological states.

A two-wave longitudinal survey study with municipal employees confirmed perceived organisational support at time 1 positively predicted psychological empowerment and PsyCap at time 2 controlling baseline levels (Matthews *et al.*, 2022). In turn, both PsyCap and empowerment positively predicted organisational commitment and job performance. This supports temporal precedence from organisational support to psychological states to well-being.

Overall, organisational support provides an enabling condition for employees to internalize psychological empowerment and capitalize on PsyCap resources predicting work motivation, engagement, and satisfaction (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2022). The variables represent interdependent facets of an overarching employee thriving process within supportive contexts. Optimizing the system requires enhancing POS, PsyCap, empowerment, and wellness in tandem.

2.7 Knowledge gap

While extensive research demonstrates positive relationships between psychological capital, psychological empowerment, organisational support, and employee well-being, limited work has examined how these linkages may differ across generational cohorts (Lyons *et al.*, 2022; Rudolph *et al.*, 2022). Generational differences in work

values, personality traits, and motivating factors based on the cultural zeitgeist individuals are socialized in may mediate the effects of leadership, organisational support, and psychological conditions on work outcomes. However, sparse research directly tests generation as a mediator.

For instance, Baby Boomers' preference for hierarchy, structure, and esteem for authority figures could strengthen the mediated effects of perceived organisational support or empowering leadership on their attitudes compared to Gen X employees who value independence and self-reliance (Becton *et al.*, 2022). Meanwhile, Millennials' higher motivation for rapid development and growth opportunities may result in organisational support practices focused on advancement contributing more strongly to their well-being relative to Gen Z's craving for meaningful roles, when considering the mediating role of generational differences (Rudolph *et al.*, 2022). Generation may alter pathways to thriving by mediating these relationships.

Yet scholars caution applying generational insights too narrowly without consideration of wider sociohistorical and individual factors shaping member perspectives and behaviours (Joshi *et al.*, 2022). Empirical evidence directly examining generation as a mediator of workplace processes remains scarce. Overall, the role of generational differences as an intervening mechanism influencing the relationships between POS, psychological conditions, and well-being represents an important open question warranting investigation to advance research and practice.

The study identified a knowledge gap related to the absence of empirical research on how generational differences influence the connections between psychological capital (PsyCap), psychological empowerment (PE), organisational support (POS), and employee well-being. Although there is a significant amount of conceptual and theoretical literature on these constructs, there is limited empirical evidence connecting them. The study's proposed framework integrates PsyCap, PE, POS, and well-being, while also exploring how generational differences could impact these relationships. This framework provides a new perspective on comprehending the intricate dynamics within military organisations, specifically the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The study aims to explore how various generations within the SANDF react to organisational support, empowerment initiatives, and

psychological resources to uncover the distinct challenges and opportunities encountered by each generational group.

Furthermore, the research aims to add to the existing body of knowledge on workplace well-being by emphasising the impact of generational differences as a mediating factor. It is essential to grasp how generational influences impact people's views, attitudes, and actions in relation to workplace policies and mental well-being to create successful support strategies and interventions (Rudolph et al., 2022).

Moreover, the research provides practical implications for leaders in organisations like the SANDF and other military institutions. Understanding the varied needs and preferences of different generations allows leaders to customise support programmes, training initiatives, and leadership strategies to effectively meet the needs of their personnel. This customised strategy can improve participation, motivation, and general welfare among SANDF members, ultimately leading to organisational efficiency and mission preparedness.

2.8 Proposed model

Proposed conceptual model and overview of mediation based on the previous research conducted. The proposed conceptual model was derived from SDT, SET and Generational theory and PERMA theory. Figure 1 shows the proposed model.

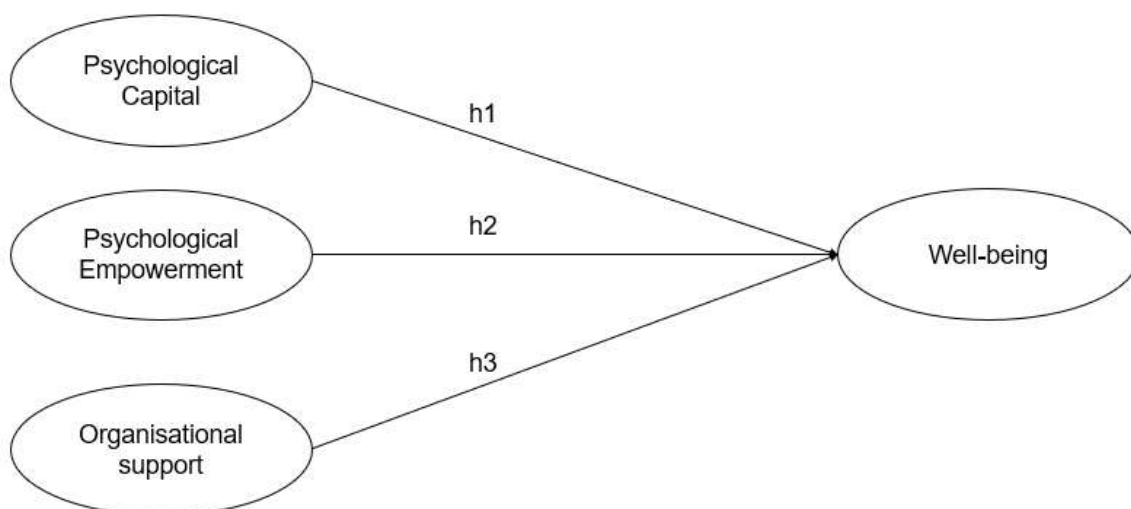


Figure 2.1: Proposes that there is relationship between Psy-Cap, Perceived Organisational Support, and psychological empowerment in relation to well-being.

Mediation effect = $h4a$

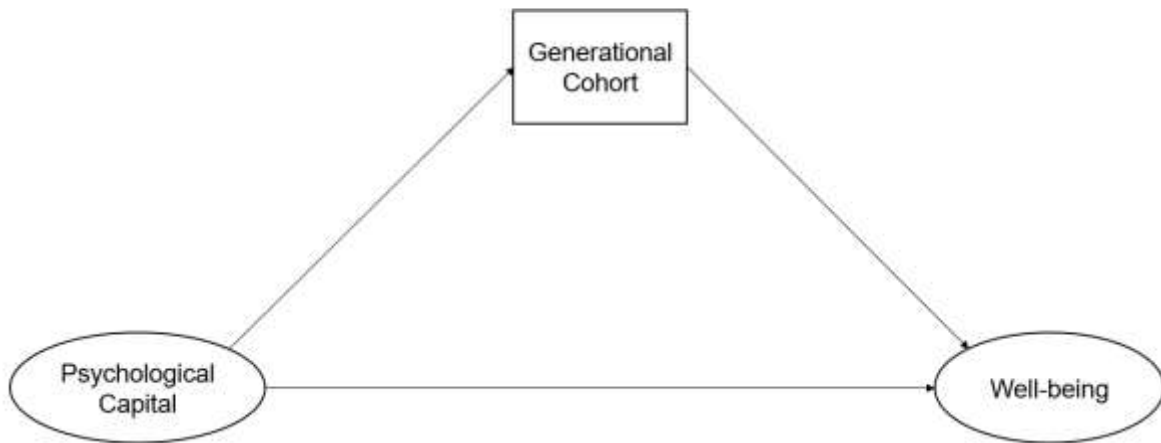


Figure 2.2: Proposes that Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) have a significant mediation effect on the relationship between Psychological Capital and well-being.

Mediation effect = $h4b$

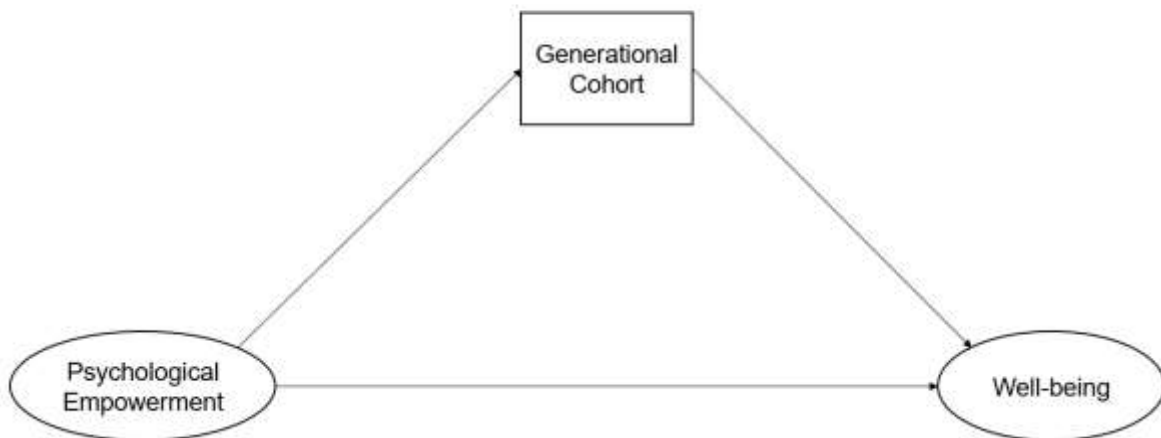


Figure 2.3: Proposes that Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) have a significant mediation effect on the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and well-being.

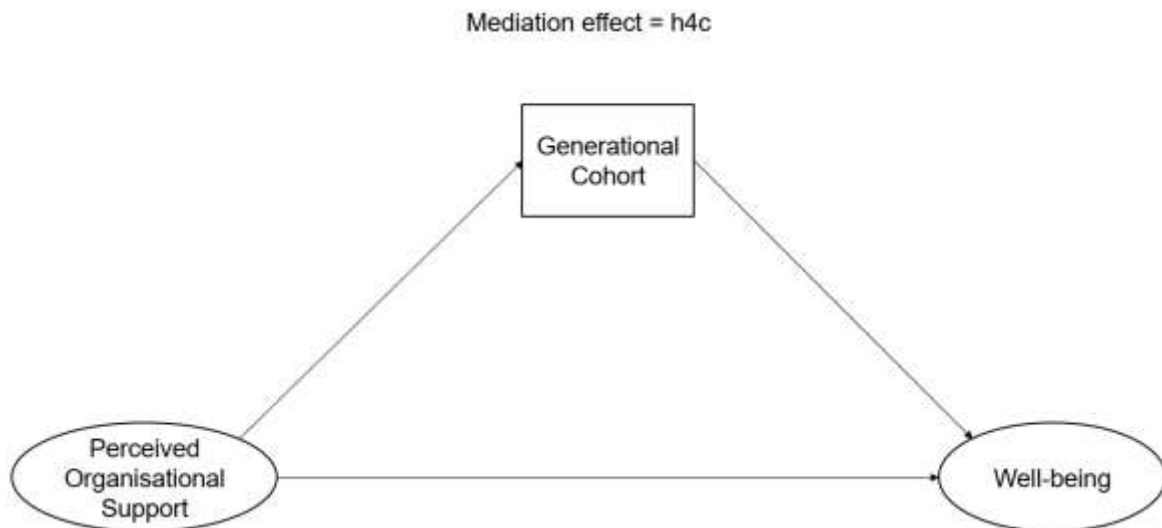


Figure 2.4: *Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) have a significant mediation effect on the relationship between Organisational Support and well-being.*

2.9 Proposed Conceptual Model

The proposed conceptual model is based on theory and research suggesting perceived organisational support provides an enabling condition promoting employees' psychological empowerment and psychological capital. In turn, psychological empowerment and psychological capital contribute uniquely to enhancing employee well-being and positive work attitudes. Meanwhile, generational mediators are expected to impact the magnitude of these relationships, such that the effects differ across Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z based on cohort work values, traits, and motivations.

Specifically, organisational support will relate more strongly to psychological capital development for Baby Boomers and Gen X compared to Generation Y and Gen Z when considering the mediating effect of generation. Empowering younger workers may depend more on growth opportunities than broader organisational support perceptions. Meanwhile, psychological empowerment will be a stronger predictor of well-being for Generation Y and Gen Z workers who highly value rapid development and meaningful roles. For Baby Boomers, psychological capital stemming from organisational support may matter more when accounting for the generational differences as a mediator.

Overall, the model proposes that providing a supportive organisational climate enhances employees' psychological resources embodied in capital and empowerment, subsequently promoting well-being. However, generations socialized in different eras with varying values may exhibit different pathways to thriving through the mediating mechanism of generational cohort. Testing this model can advance nuanced understanding of employing and engaging a multi-generational workforce.

2.10 The Behaviours, Life Expectations, Work Ethics, and Mind-Set of Different Generational Cohorts

During the literature review, the behaviours, life expectations, work ethics, and mind-set of different generational cohorts, both within and outside the military context are explored. It is essential to grasp these aspects to effectively tackle the research questions presented in this study.

Different age groups display unique behaviours influenced by their upbringing and societal factors. As an example, Baby Boomers, who grew up in the post-WWII era, tend to value hierarchy, duty, and achievement (Kamarck, 2022). On the other hand, Generation X prioritises autonomy, work-life balance, and unconventional thinking (Mattock et al., 2022). Millennials are interested in connection, meaningful roles, and rapid growth opportunities, while Generation Z values individualised training and technological integration (Kamarck, 2022). These behavioural tendencies impact how individuals in each cohort navigate their personal and professional lives.

Furthermore, life expectations differ among different generations, affecting their career paths and goals. Individuals from the Baby Boomer generation, shaped by the economic conditions of their time, might place importance on stability and career progression (Kamarck, 2022). On the other hand, individuals from the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts, who grew up in the digital era, frequently prioritise finding purpose, fulfilment, and a healthy work-life balance in their careers (Mattock et al., 2022). These various expectations influence individuals' career decisions, job contentment, and overall quality of life.

Work ethics vary among different generations, showcasing their unique values and perspectives on work. Individuals from the Baby Boomer generation are typically known for their diligent work ethic and commitment to responsibilities, whereas Generation X prioritises independence and adaptability in professional settings

(Mattock et al., 2022). Young adults today prioritise collaboration, recognition, and meaningful work experiences (Kamarck, 2022). It is crucial to grasp these work ethics to create organisational policies and practices that align with the values of each generation.

Moreover, different age groups have unique perspectives that impact how they handle tasks and make choices. Older individuals may demonstrate a more conventional mind-set, valuing loyalty and persistence, whereas younger generations prioritise innovation and flexibility (Mattock et al., 2022). Youth today, known for their tech skills and social awareness, tend to have a strong entrepreneurial spirit, always looking for chances to develop and make a difference (Kamarck, 2022). It is crucial to identify and comprehend these mind-sets to promote teamwork, creativity, and unity among teams with members from different generations.

2.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an integrated review of the study variables including psychological capital, psychological empowerment, organisational support, employee well-being, and generational differences. It summarized conceptual definitions and components of each variable, along with empirical research demonstrating their relationships with employee and organisational outcomes. Antecedents and consequences of the variables were outlined, along with mediators, moderators, and temporal models from the literature.

Key findings indicate perceived organisational support provides an enabling condition for employees to internalize psychological empowerment mind-sets and capitalize on psychological capital resources. In turn, psychological capital and empowerment engender positive worker functioning, flourishing, and attitudes. Well-being stems from organisational contexts fostering growth and caring. Meanwhile, generational differences based on shifting cultural values and work preferences carry implications for optimally structuring initiatives to support thriving across age cohorts.

This integration justifies the proposed conceptual model whereby perceived organisational support enhances psychological capital and empowerment, subsequently boosting multidimensional employee well-being, with generation acting as a moderator. The review highlighted the knowledge gap regarding generational differences in these interrelationships. In sum, this analysis provides a synthesized

foundation and rationale for the present study examining the mediating role of generational cohorts in linkages between organisational support, psychological conditions, and soldier well-being within the military. The following chapter will explore the research methodology.

3. CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the literature review on theoretical and empirical level. The present chapter will explore the research methodology that will be adopted in this study. Research Methodology is the science of studying how research is carried out and involves studying the various steps taken by a researcher and the logic behind these steps (Kothari, 2004). In this particular study, firstly the research objectives and hypothesis were once again brought into focus as a reminder of what the study is about and to ensure that the research methodology is appropriate for the given objectives. An attempt was then made to identify the research design which included the research philosophy, research approach and research strategy. Data collection instruments were also specified as well as the target population and sampling and data analysis techniques in order produce the appropriate methodology to answer our research problem. Furthermore, the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments were discussed. Limitations and ethical issues were discussed before concluding with a chapter summary.

3.2 Research design

Research design is a framework or blueprint for conducting the research project. According to Mouton (2006) a set of rules or instructions that specifies the methods and procedures for gathering and analysing data is known as a research design. In reality, Mouton (2006) points out that research design may be considered as a strategic framework for ensuring that the data gathered is acceptable for addressing or working on the research topic. Burns and Bush (2005) listed three types of research designs: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. The researcher used both exploratory and descriptive research design in this contemporary study.

3.2.1 Descriptive research design

According to Nykiel (2007), descriptive design allows for the generalization of sample results, which is critical for validity and reliability. Validity refers to "how well the experiment measure what it claims to measure, whereas reliability refers to the stability or consistency of the experiment's outcome'. According to Burns and Bush (2005), descriptive design is used to address the following research questions of who, what,

where when and how. In agreement with Burn and Bush (2005), the descriptive design enabled the researcher to do the following: To begin, conduct a survey of employees from South African national defence forces ;secondly, to describe the extent of the mediating role of generational differences on the relationships between psychological empowerment and organisational support; thirdly, to compile and describe the respondents' demographics; and fourthly to identify the most important factors affecting the well-being of SA National defence forces members

3.2.2 Exploratory research design

According to Babbie and Mouton (2010), exploratory research design, aids the researcher in gaining a greater grasp of a topic. Similar to Babbie and Mouton (2010), exploratory design enabled the researcher to have a better understanding since it involved the used interviews with project managers. Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (2010) offers the analogy that exploratory design entails serving respondents who have prior expertise with, and knowledge of the subject being studied.

3.2.3 Explanatory research design

According to George and Merkus (2022), explanatory research is a research method that explores why something occurs when limited information is available. It can help you increase your understanding of a given topic, ascertain how or why a particular phenomenon is occurring, and predict future occurrences (Mohajan, 2020). Mohajan, (2020) further states that, explanatory research can also be explained as a “cause and effect” model, investigating patterns and trends in existing data that have not been previously investigated. For this reason, it is often considered a type of causal research (Mohajan, 2020).

In the research undertaken, both the descriptive and explanatory types of research were used. The research provided descriptive information on the independent variables and went on further, to establish the relationships between the well-being (dependent variables) and Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support (independent variable). A descriptive and explanatory research design was also chosen to meet the objectives of this study. Descriptive surveys are designed to portray accurately the characteristics of particular individuals, situations or groups (Avoke, 2005; Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Avoke (2005) asserted that, it is used as an assessment tool to provide information on which to base sound

decisions and to prepare the background for more constructive programme of any research. To get reliable statistical results, it is important to survey people in fairly large numbers and to make sure they are a representative sample of total population (Pearce, *et al.*, 2020). Descriptive research design allows the researcher to acquire information directly from the source and in a descriptive manner through questionnaire (Seixas, *et al.*, 2018). The information gathered can be tabulated and depicted graphically to enhance strong analysis.

The researcher adopted the descriptive research design because it accurately portrays the characteristics of the population and of the independent variables under study which their characteristics have an influence on this study's results. This choice is informed by Cohen and Manion, (2009), who stated:

Descriptive research is concerned with conditions or relationship that exists; practices that prevail; beliefs, points of view or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; effects that are being felt; or trends that are developing. At times, descriptive research is concerned with how what is or what exists is related to some preceding event that has influenced or affected a present condition or event (p. 70)

In this situation the characteristics of the respondents were their gender, work experience, educational level attained, and also position at work. These characteristics I found them to be important in conducting this research which is dealing with primary data. For instance, gender itself was found to be a very key factor which may distort the reliability of results if not handled carefully because male and female tend to see things differently. This is the same case to other characteristics such work experience, educational level and position at work at SANDF.

The explanatory research design was used in this study because there was need to test hypothesis which testes if Well-being is the mediating role of Generational difference on the relationship between Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support on the well-being of South African National Defence Force members. Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support is an independent variable which is being measured by Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support detection. However, the researcher made use of different variables in order to explain the effectiveness of well-being on the detection and prevention of

Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support activities.

3.3 Research Philosophy

In this current study a positivist research philosophy was used as the study looks at a causal effect between the independent and dependent variables. A structured view was also used in the data collection through surveys. Dawadi, *et al.*, (2021) states that, the advantages of positivism are its emphasis on objectivity and numerical analysis, reliability of results, control of the research process and collection of a lot of data in an economical way.

The researcher adopted positivism it believed that results are valid if they are derived from testing a hypothesis and if obtained objectively and externally (detached from respondents' influence). This came to the advantage of this study because positivism uses quantitative methods as supported by Dawadi, *et al.*, (2021) and came in tandem with the explanatory research design above which advocated for the use of hypothesis in determining the mediating role of Generational difference on the relationship between Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support on the well-being of South African National Defence Force members. The researcher chose the positivism because it uses questionnaires. As alluded by Rathi and Ronald (2022) questionnaires are used to collect quantitative data and they give respondents enough time to respond freely after a deeper understanding of the questions than the use of interviews which demand an instant respond. Questionnaires and statistical analysis and require collection of large samples and the data collection is done in a structured way (Robinson, 2022; Knekta, *et al.*, 2019 & Nica, 2021).

3.4 Research approach

This study chose to follow a positivist approach because the researcher was interested in understanding relationships between variables and staying objective and not interacting with participants during data collection (Park, *et al.*, 2020). The researcher applied a non-experimental, quantitative, cross-sectional design. According to Golafshan (2003) and Creswell (2014), quantitative research allows researchers to familiarize themselves with the problem or concept to be studied and generate hypotheses to be tested. Cross-sectional studies are usually relatively inexpensive

and allow researchers to collect a great deal of information from a large pool of participants within a short period (Bernard, 2013).

Positivist approach is a scientific method that seeks to prove a theory or a hypothesis. The fact that this study got the hypothesis, the researcher had to adopt the positivist approach and tests the hypothesis in order to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis. In this regard using the positivist approach, by using people to gather information and to deduce conclusions from what they do and from what they say pertaining conducting well-being of soldiers. The researcher also made use of positivist approach because my target population was very big on South African National Defence Force members, so as a result, the researcher deduced the total population from seventy-two thousand to a reasonable target population of five hundred the study has chosen a sample size based on the rule of thumb by Roscoe (1975). The rule declared that sample sizes larger than 30 and smaller than 500 are appropriate for most of the studies. If a sample size is over 500, it would be considered as too large resulting in causing type error 1, (Halim & Ishak, 2014) a situation where by the researcher reject the true null hypothesis. This view was supported by Sekaran (2000) who confirmed that if the sample size is too large, a weak relationship will reach a significant level despite actually is not. Relative to the aforementioned references, the study used a stratified sampling technique to consider a sample size of 382 South African National Defence Force members. In the study, the quantitative/positivist approach was used as the information sought was sought for cause-effect relationships between variables and hypothesis testing. The researcher used positivist approach because it has been recommended with previous scholars to be high reliability, is objective, research design is decided in advance, in conducting the study it was less time-consuming compared to qualitative research and can produce specific and precise data. The fact that it employs probability sampling means that each unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample and therefore highly representative of the population under study. This was also adopted by (Oppenheim, 1992).

3.5 Research Strategy

This study used the quantitative research strategy. Quantitative research strategies were used because the researcher had to test hypothesis and collect quantitative data which produce data that is numerically analysed and presented statistically on tables

and graphs (ACAPS, 2012). The objective was to get consistent answers to standardised questions in order to generalise the results to a given my population and the topic understudy. Quantitative research strategy was preferred because strengths of quantitative research data are in the numeric estimates, comparable data, simple data analysis, low cost, reliability and in the less time consumed compared with qualitative strategies. In conducting the study, the research seeks to test whether a specific factor influences an outcome by providing the treatment to one group and not applying it to another group. Both groups were tested then tested on how they scored on the outcome. The researcher made use of questionnaires in data collection. Questionnaires revealed the numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes or opinions of the population as was studied (Oppenheim, 1992). The research opted for a structured (questionnaires) quantitative research strategy due to its objectivity, less time-consuming and low -cost nature.

3.6 Target Population

McMillan, (2006, p. 146) defined study population as: “*a group of units or individual objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which researchers intend to generalise the results of their research’s*”. A population also termed sampling frame, is therefore, a group of individuals with the same characteristics or indicators which are to be studied. De Vaus, (2014) defined a sampling frame as the list of the entire target population from which the study sample is to be drawn.

Kumar also (2015) defined a population as the set of all objects that possess some common set of characteristics with respect to some research problem. According to Kumar (2015) population comprises all elements or units under investigation for a specific study. The study population consisted of approximately 55 000 South African National Defence Force members (SANDF) employed who are between the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) down to the last rank of Private (Pte).

3.6.1 Units of Analysis

A sample is defined as a smaller set of data that a researcher chooses or selects from a larger population by using a pre-defined selection method (Creswell, 2014). The research sample was members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) employed who are between the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) down to the last rank of Private (Pte). The reserve forces members were also included in the present

study. High-rank caring members from Lieutenant to General were excluded from the study due to their busy schedule, which they often unavailable. Subgroups was divided into Generational Cohorts, namely, X (1965 - 1980), Y (1981 - 1996), and Z (1997 - 2012). Permission to conduct research from military personnel was obtained from Defence Intelligence (DI). Permission to access members or participants was obtained from different unit commanders upon successful approval from DI. The researchers did not experience any problems or challenges in obtaining the authority because the SANDF encourages and support continuous research within the military.

3.6.2 Sampling technique

Sampling techniques are methods used in selecting a sample. According to Creswell, (2009), sampling techniques are categorised into two types of namely probability and non-probability sampling. With probability sampling, the chances of each unit being selected can be premeditated and each unit has equal chances of being selected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Non-probability sampling, on the other side, depends on the researcher and is commonly subject to bias. The findings obtained from the sample can thus be used to infer to the whole group or population.

This study used probability Stratified random sampling to ensure that every stratum (Generation X, Y and Z) is adequately represented. Stratified sampling is where the population is divided into strata (or subgroups), and a random sample is taken from each subgroup (Taherdoost, 2016 & Bhardwaj, 2019). According to Raosoft (2024), a sample size of 777 was deemed sufficient sample to draw assumptions of a population size of 55 000 at a 99.5% confidence level and with a 5% margin of error.

The study utilised stratified random sampling to guarantee proper representation of each subgroup within the population of interest, specifically Generation X, Y, and Z members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). This method of sampling enables the researcher to categorise the population into different strata according to specific characteristics (such as generational cohorts) and then choose samples randomly from each stratum (Taherdoost, 2016; Bhardwaj, 2019).

By categorising the population by generation, the researcher can ensure that each generational cohort is proportionally represented in the sample. It is crucial to consider this approach when examining generational differences. It enables comparisons and

analyses within each generational group, leading to a thorough understanding of the entire population. Table 3.1 shows the strata and their sample sizes.

Table 3.1 Strata

Table 3.1		
n = 777		
STRATA	SAMPLE SIZE	
SA Army	585	75.3%
SAAF	79	10.2%
SAMHS	78	10%
SA Navy	35	4.5%

3.6.2 Sample size

Table 3.1 *Sample size*

Item	Population	Sample size
South African National Defence Force (SANDF)	55 000	777
Total		777

Source; Primary data, 2022.

For large populations such as South African National Defence Force (SANDF) employed who are between the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) down to the last rank of Private (Pte), Raosoft calculator (2024) provides the simple calculation for a representative sample size for proportions.

Figure 3.1 Sample size: Raosoft calculator (2024)

What margin of error can you accept?	<input type="text" value="5"/>	%
5% is a common choice		
What confidence level do you need?	<input type="text" value="99.5"/>	%
Typical choices are 90%, 95%, or 99%		
What is the population size?	<input type="text" value="55000"/>	
What is the response distribution?	<input type="text" value="50"/>	%
Leave this as 50%		

Your recommended sample size is	777
--	------------

- Where margin of error was 5%
- Confidence level of 99.5%
- Population size 55000
- Response distribution 50%

The above formula was used to choose a sample Seven Hundred and Seventy-seven members from South African National Defence Force (SANDF) employed who are between the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) down to the last rank of Private (Pte). This sample size is justifiable because Israel (1992) and Gujarati (2003) supported the sample size by asserting that if descriptive statistics analysis is to be used a good sample size for regression ranges from 30 and above which can allow rigorous state impact evaluations and be executions.

3.7 Procedures for Data Collection

The data collection procedure entails gaining of access to the premises of firm, presentation of one is self to authorities and participants respectively and becoming acquainted with the research participants.

3.7.1 Gaining access

An introductory letter was obtained from the university by the researcher, introducing the student and seeking permission for her to be allowed to carry out a research project in the South African National Defence Force. After getting approval, written permission

to conduct research from Defence Intelligence was granted. Access to the military organisations was granted by their respective officer commanding. Conditions of access was agreed upon between the researcher and the respective unit commanders. Moreover, the researcher liaised with the Communication officer, who explained the purpose of the research, issued consent forms to those who agreed to participate, distributed the questionnaires to those interested and collected the completed ones and store them in a secure place. Participants were asked to complete a participant information sheet that outlined all research ethical considerations. After obtaining written consent, completion of the questionnaire took place following an introduction to the research content and purpose of the questionnaire by the Communication Officer. Arrangements made with the management regarding time schedule ensured that there were minimal inconveniences to the clients.

The Communication Officer played a crucial role in facilitating access to participants within the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Their responsibilities included coordinating communication between the research team and SANDF personnel, disseminating information about the study, and assisting with logistical arrangements for data collection. Additionally, the Communication Officer served as a liaison between the research team and SANDF leadership, ensuring that the study adhered to organisational protocols and guidelines.

The Communication Officer held a rank of a private, lowest rank in the SANDF in order to neutral the possibility of power dynamics given the different rank groupings. He spoke clearly and accurately to the respondents on the possible harm and benefits of research before they were presented with questionnaires to complete. This was done to ensure that they make an informed decision on whether to participate or not in the data collection process. Bryman, (2012) says that questionnaires can be mailed, self-administered or group administered. This option was not possible due to the nature of deployment units in the military situated in remote area with no network coverage. The self-administration of questionnaire was adopted because of many advantages associated with it. According to Bryman, (2012) self-administration of questionnaires results in yielding high return rate. The mailing of questionnaire can result in low return rate of questionnaires and some sections of the questionnaire can be left out when the researcher is not present or administering the instrument (Babbie, 2010). The group administered method can result in subjects' discussions hence

biased information as they can tend to provide information based on group consensus (Babbie, 2010). Therefore, these inherent problems explain why the researcher shuns these two methods of research tool administration and used self-administered method.

3.7.2 Research instruments

According to Kotler (2015) data collection procedure entails how the primary data will be gathered. To collect data used to answer the research questions, the researcher used questionnaires and interviews. This was supported by (Nyakundi, *et al*, 2014) who asserted that data collection is a process of gathering measuring information the research variables systematically in order to solve given research questions, test hypotheses and evaluate outcomes.

3.7.2.1 Questionnaires

Data generation instruments are tools used by researchers to gather data or information (Babbie, 2010). There are several types of research instruments. These include questionnaires, observation, interviews, content analysis and document analysis. Madziyire, *et al.*, (2004) advice that research instruments should be clearly described so as to bring out their strengths and weaknesses as a way of justifying their selection and suitability to the research. The research instrument for the present study has clear instructions and their items were very clear, logical and they addressed sub problems identified. The study employed closed ended questionnaires.

3.7.2.2 Closed ended questionnaires.

Chiromo, (2002) averred that a questionnaire is that form of enquiry, which contains a systematically compiled and organised series of questions that are sent to the population samples. In view of Chisi, *et al*, (2004) a questionnaire is a list of carefully structured questions chosen after considerable testing, with a view to eliciting reliable responses from a chosen sample. Patton, (2006), is of the view that questionnaires are advantageous instruments for conducting survey information, providing structural, often numerical data and being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often being straightforward, easy to construct and to analyse. In this study closed ended questionnaires were used to gather numerical data. Leedy and Ormrod, (2014) reasoned closed ended questionnaires give the respondent's freedom to answer questions posed truthfully without the undue influence of the researcher. Beneficially, information obtained from open ended questionnaires can be quantified

and it can be used to compare and contrast each research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This therefore resonated well with this quantitative study. In addition, use of closed ended questionnaires offered anonymity that is names of the respondents were kept secret and this helped in promoting the ethical principle of anonymity in this study.

The questionnaire items were formulated in such a way that they would not be double-blurred questions in which the word 'and' was used, where it combines two variable or concepts in one question. This was done for the purpose of obtaining accurate and reliable data from the respondents (Denzin & Lincoln, 2010). They were also made as short and accurate as possible for the respondents to understand them without difficulties. Assistance from experts on quantitative studies from the faculty under which the student was sought, particularly to get advice with regard to legitimacy of items for statistical purposes.

According to Gall *et al.*, (2017) a questionnaire is a scripted document comprising of set questions to be answered by individuals in a subset group that is to be sampled and it allows respondents to answer at their own leisure. The questionnaires printed and hand delivered given the nature of the military as stated above. Questioners were used in the collection of primary data because of their merits which include that responses were quick and cheap than interviews.

The researcher chose this instrument because it is possible to collect data from a large proportion of the sample size. The use of questionnaire was advantageous in that the respondents express their own views as respondents were given enough time to answer questions at their own pace without any pressure as opposed to prompt response on face-to-face interviews where respondents are rushed and end up lost some important information (Kotler, 2015). The technique also ensures anonymity of respondents thus eliciting more honest answers (Chaleunvong, 2009). The following section will provide a detail property of the psychological instruments utilised in this study:

a. Psychological empowerment

Spritzer's (1995) 12-items scale was used to assess psychological empowerment. The scale consists of four dimensions: 'meaning', 'competence,' 'self-determination', and 'impact.' Each dimension has three items, and each item is rated on a seven-point Likert scale. The instrument has been used in empowerment research (Thomas &

Velthouse, 1990; Zimmerman, 1990; Degago, 2014). Cronbach's α for this scale was 0.84 for a retail service industry.

b. Survey of Organisational Support Scale

The proposed study used the unidimensional and shortened Survey of Perceived Organisational Support (SPOS) (Eisenberger, *et al.*, 1986) to assess POS. It consists of eight items, which can be rated on a six-point Likert scale. According to the scale's authors, it has an alpha reliability of .90. Additionally, the shortened version of the SPOS has proven reliable in the Chinese context, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 (Shen *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, in a South African context, SPOS has shown to have a Cronbach's alpha ranging in from 0.89 (Roemer & Harris, 2018) to 0.90 (Meintjes & Hofmeyr, 2018).

c. Psychological Capital Questionnaire

PsyCap was assessed by Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans, *et al.*, 2007). The questionnaire consists of four subscales measuring self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. Each subscale consists of 6 items, making up 24 items, and is rated on a six-point Likert scale. Item numbers 13, 20, and 23 are reversed scored items. The reliability of the scale was .90 (Luthans, *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, PCQ-24 showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90 (Roemer & Harris, 2018).

d. Well-being

Well-being assessed with the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS, Tennant, *et al.*, 2007). It is a unidimensional measure consisting of 14 items that refer to hedonic and eudemonic well-being. The items are rated on a five-point Likert scale. Previous research reported Cronbach's alphas of 0.89 and 0.92 (Malinowski & Lim, 2015; Tennant *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, Roemer and Harri's (2018) studies found a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93.

3.8 Reliability and validity of the research instruments.

Babbie, (2010) defines trustworthiness or reliability as a matter of whether a particular technique applied repeatedly to the same object would yield the same result. Reliability therefore is a measure of uniformity with which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Bryman, (2012) postulated that validity refers to whether the

researcher is observing or measuring what is intended by given instruments or tools. Validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning, picture or understanding of the concept of phenomena under investigation (Shumbayaonda, 2000).

3.8.1 Validity

To ensure external validity, I used random samples, repeat study several times and ensure that sample is representative of the population. Internal validity is the extent to which the instrument is measuring what it is supposed to measure and includes content, face and experimenter bias, pretesting, maturation and experiment mortality (subjects dropping out). Consulting subject experts and conducting a pilot study are some ways to ensure internal validity. The questionnaire was sent to the supervisor for checking and also pilot testing was conducted as a way of ensuring validity of the research instrument.

Pilot testing or pre-testing is a small-scale trial run and, in this case, of a questionnaire and assists researcher in determining and eliminating potential errors in content, wording, order, form and layout of questionnaire (Saunders, 2009). Pilot testing is also useful in training the researcher. It involves using a small number of respondents (10 - 100 recommended) to test the appropriateness of the questions and their comprehension. The sample selected for the pilot study should be similar to the units to be included in the main study in terms of background, characteristics, familiarity with topic, attitudes and behaviours of interest. Aspects to be evaluated in the pilot-testing are reactions of respondents to different aspects of the research, availability of study population, acceptability of questions asked and willingness of respondents to cooperate in answering the self-administered questionnaires.

In the study supervisor was consulted and a pre-test was done through conducting a pilot study on 105 respondents to ensure validity of the research instrument. Results from the reliability test on the pilot study indicated that some questions in some of the variables needed to be revised /reworded. The revision was done on the questionnaire before the main survey was launched. Structural Equation Modelling was used to conduct the Confirmatory Factor Analysis. All scales showed acceptable to good fit except for The Perceived Organisational Support scale that did not meet the criteria.

3.8.2 Reliability

The reliability indices of each scale were found to be sufficient (above .70) (Kaplan & Sacuzzo, 2017; Pallant, 2011). The Psychological Empowerment scale had the highest reliability (.91), followed by the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (.87), and the Perceived Psychological Support scale (.82) and Psychological Capital (.82). For the Psychological Capital subscales, Self-efficacy was the most reliable (.82) followed by Hope (.79). The other two, Resilience and Optimism, did not meet the minimum criteria to be considered reliable with alphas of .57 and .52, respectively.

As noted above, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for Resilience and Optimism were slightly lower than expected (0.57 and 0.53, respectively), but they still showed some level of internal consistency. Although not meeting the typical reliability threshold, these coefficients suggest a certain level of reliability in measuring these constructs (Sacuzzo, 2017). Resilience and optimism are essential elements of Psychological Capital, a key concept in researching employee well-being and organisational results. Not considering these sub-constructs could lead to missing out on crucial aspects of people's psychological resources, which might restrict the depth of the analysis (Creswell, 2018). In addition, while lower reliabilities may result in some measurement error, incorporating Resilience and Optimism enables a more detailed analysis of the connection between Psychological Capital and well-being outcomes. Recognising the constraints linked to these sub-constructs and carefully interpreting their findings can provide valuable insights when included in the analysis (Pallant, 2011).

All the Psychological Empowerment subscales, Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact, on the other hand, exceeded the criteria with alphas of .83, .81, .76, and .77, respectively. The correlations of the items with the entire scale did not reveal problematic properties and are high.

3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis

Research results were presented through tables, charts and percentages. A statistical package Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the analysis of the data for ease of analysis and interpretation of results. The data was analysed using both statistical and narrative methods. Specifically, the response rate, population distribution, credibility of research instruments, normality test, descriptive analysis, tests of independence and inferential statistics were analysed.

3.9.1 Procedures for Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse the data. Spearman correlation and Regression analysis will be conducted.

3.9.1.1 *Spearman's correlation analysis*

A correlation analysis assesses the strength and direction of the relationship between variables (Pallant, 2011). Two widely used statistical techniques used to examine correlation are Pearson's and Spearman's correlation coefficients. Pearson's correlation is a parametric test that requires continuous, normally distributed data (Pallant, 2011). Spearman's rho measures the strength of association between two variables (Pallant, 2011). Compared to the Pearson correlation coefficient, the Spearman correlation does not require continuous-level data (interval or ratio), because it uses ranks instead of assumptions about the distributions of the two variables (Lani, 2010; Solutions, 2016). This allows us to analyse the association between variables of ordinal measurement levels. Moreover, the Spearman correlation does not assume that the variables are normally distributed (Pallant, 2011; Solutions, 2016). Given this discussion, it is clear that, a Spearman correlation analysis can therefore be used in many cases in which the assumptions of the Pearson correlation (continuous-level variables, linearity, heteroscedasticity, and normality) are not met. Spearman's correlation was thus used in the study to determine the strength of the relationships between the constructs: PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support, and Wellbeing.

3.9.1.2 *Regression analysis*

Multiple Regression analysis is a statistical method that helps us to analyse and understand the relationship between two or more variables of interest (Gordon, 2015). In this particular study, multiple regression analysis will be carried out to test the extent of the impact of independent variables on dependent variables and the nature of the mediating effect (i.e., full or partial). Furthermore, a Structural Equation Modelling will be conducted to determine the model fit for the proposed models. Moreover, Anova was conducted to establish the extent of the variance.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are professional pre-requisite and fundamental principles such as honesty, fairness, respect for persons and maintaining their privacy (Cohen, *et al.*, 2011). These principles acted as guiding pillars for the researcher to conduct data collection process without causing any form of harm to respondents in the research process thus appreciating their contribution to the study. Ethics is that branch of philosophy relating to human conduct with respect to the rightness of certain actions, and to the badness or goodness of the motives and ends of such actions (Makore-Rukuni, 2001). The researcher first established that his research was ethically acceptable as it was not focusing on personal and sensitive issues like sexual behaviours.

The researcher firstly sought for permission from responsible authorities (See appendix I & L). All the participants of the research were adult people who would make an informed decision (See appendix A-D). The communication Officer articulated and communicated informed consent procedures in ways participants apprehend. The researcher and the communication Officer developed scientifically acceptable research protocols that were worthy of respondents' time and have a chance of obtaining meaningful chunks of information. The researcher and communication Officer maintained the dignity and welfare of the subjects by avoiding harm like anger, irritation, lack of respect from others and negative labelling. The researcher and communication Officer informed the respondents about all the potential harm of the study; hence they were not deceived. The communication officer played a crucial role in facilitating access to participants within the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Their responsibilities included coordinating communication between the research team and SANDF personnel, disseminating information about the study, and assisting with logistical arrangements for data collection. Additionally, the communication officer may have served as a liaison between the research team and SANDF leadership, ensuring that the study adhered to organisational protocols and guidelines.

Regarding the rank of participants, it is noteworthy that 40% of respondents held the rank of Private. This demographic information could indeed have implications for the completion of self-administered questionnaires. For instance, lower-ranking personnel

may have different levels of literacy, comprehension, or motivation compared to higher-ranking officers. Understanding these dynamics can inform the design and administration of questionnaires to ensure they are accessible and relevant to all participants, regardless of rank.

In the reporting of findings, the researcher adhered to the ethical considerations of social research reporting which states that the researcher should not fabricate the data in order to suit or support his or her pre-conceived ideas and beliefs. The researcher accurately reported the findings as given by the research participants and avoided misuse of research results.

The researcher will adhere to the ethical considerations concerning publication of the study. The current research will acknowledge all members who have contributed to the success of the study. The valuable client respondents will all be acknowledged. The researcher will also cite all authorities whose publications were thoroughly read by the researcher. Issues of ethical consideration, confidentiality and privacy of the research participants and respondents had to be considered.

Research participants were at liberty to participate in the research without being coerced. Those who felt that they do not want to take part in the study were respectfully left alone and the researcher took every effort to protect the personal privacy of all respondents in the research project. The objective of the research was explained verbally, and participants were assured that the information obtained during the research will be kept confidential.

Furthermore, participants were informed about the general goal of the study, emphasizing the anonymous and voluntary nature of the research. They were told that their names will not appear in the findings, and the respondents given data was treated as confidential. Furthermore, participants were informed about their right to withdraw anytime without negative consequences. Participants were informed about their rights on who has access to their information (confidentiality).

Security of the information was upheld at all times; that is, hardcopy completed questionnaires were stored in a locked safe/cabin and softcopy data was stored digitally in an encrypted password folder for safety purposes. By ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher protected the participants from potential harm. No Conflict of Interest existed between the researcher, communication Officer and the

potential participants. No deception was used. The organization will be provided with a summary of the findings with no identifiers.

3.11 Intellectual property rights considerations

The researcher was granted permission for the use of the Psychological Capital (PSYCAP) instrument from Mind Garden. The permission to use the scales have been sought before using them (See appendix K). Other scales do not require permission to use. See scales used on appendix (E-H)

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology of the research. In response to the researcher's aims and objectives, the survey research design was adopted. The target population, the sample size and sampling technique, the research instruments and data collection procedures are outlined. Therefore, the following chapter will focus on data presentation and analysis and give a more detailed discussion on the diagnostic tests that were briefly discussed in this chapter. In chapter five, the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study are presented

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the methodology that was used to collect and analyse data for this study. The present chapter will present the results. The presentation will be guided by the research objectives. The overall aim is to address the research questions and hypotheses presented in the second chapter. Firstly, the reliability of the measures will be presented. Secondly, the validity of the measures will be analysed. Thirdly, the relationship between these constructs will be investigated by analysing correlations and conducting mediation analysis. Lastly, inferential statistics will be provided, and hypotheses will be tested.

Table 4.1

Summary the distributions of the demographics (generation X, Y & Z).

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1		
<i>Demographics: n = 743</i>		
Gender	N	%
Female	161	78.3%
Male	582	21.7%
YEAR OF BIRTH (Generations)		
X (1965 - 1980)	184	24.8%
Y (1981 - 1996)	498	67.0%
Z (1997 - 2012)	61	8.2%
ETHNICITY		
African	695	93.5%
Coloured	35	4.7%
Indian	5	0.7%
White	7	0.9%
Other	1	0.1%
EDUCATION		
Did not complete High School	26	3.5%

Diploma/Bachelor	160	21.5%
Matric/Equivalent	534	71.9%
Post-graduate	23	3.1%
MARITAL STATUS		
Widowed	6	0.8%
Divorced/Separated	36	4.8%
Living with Spouse	47	6.3%
Married	253	34.1%
Never married	401	54.0%
ARM OF SERVICE		
SA Army	575	77.4%
SAAF	69	9.3%
SAMHS	68	9.2%
SA Navy	31	4.17%

The sample size was 777 participants, however, a total of 743 participants completed the surveys. This means that the response rate of the study was found to be 95.6%. A total of 743 participants completed the surveys. Just over three quarters of the respondents were male (78.3%) and 21.7% female. Most respondents were categorised as Gen Y (between 1981 - 1996, 67.0%), followed by Gen X (1965 - 1980, 24.8%) and Gen Z (1997 - 2012, 8.2%). Moreover, the majority reported to have obtained matric or equivalent (71.9%), and 3.5% having not completed High School. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents reported having never been married (54.0%). The years of service of the respondents ranged from two years (0.4%) to 40 years (0.1%) with generation X with highest working experience, followed by Generation Y and Z Respectively. Most respondents worked in the SA Army (77.4 %), followed by SAAF (9.3%) and SAMHS (9.2%), and the SA Navy (4.17 %).

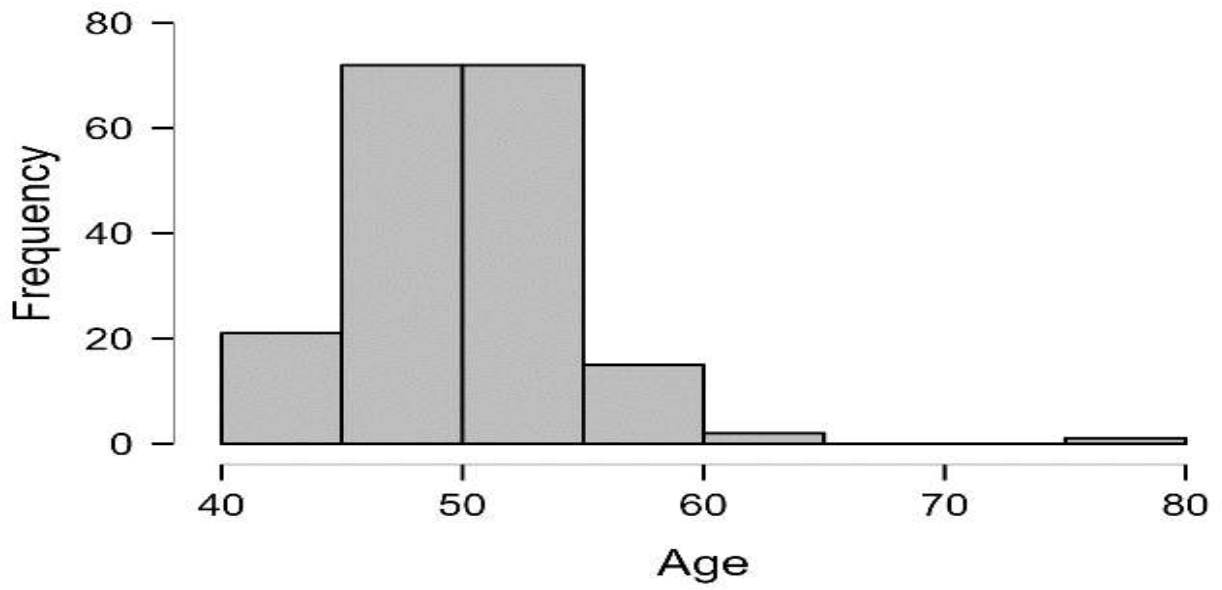


Figure 4.1: Generation X (1965 - 1980)

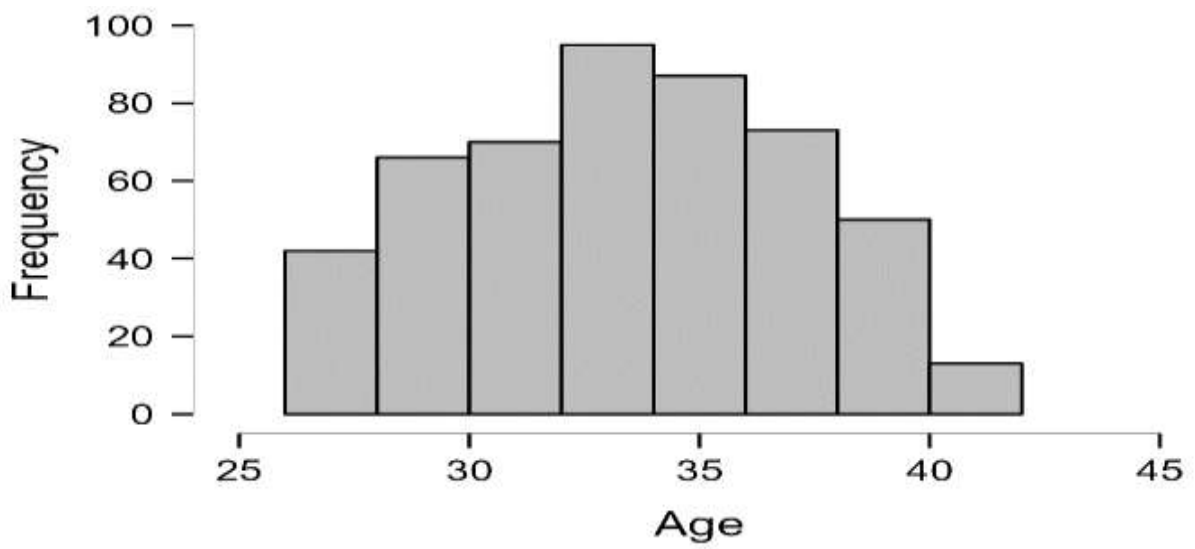


Figure 4.2: Generation Y (1981 - 1996)

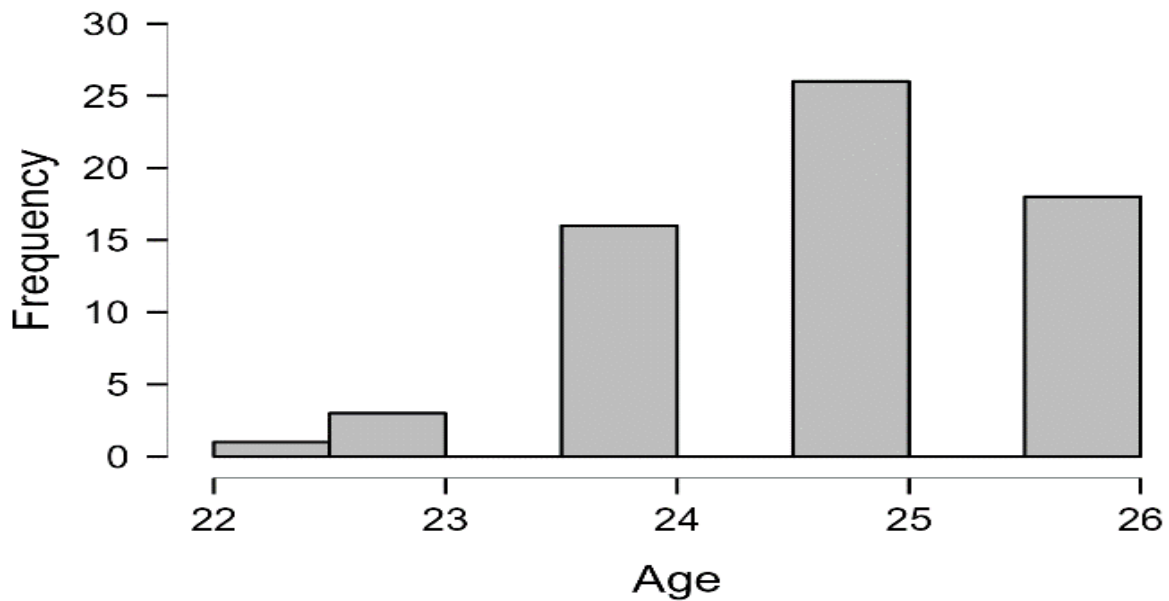


Figure 4.3: Generation Z (1997 - 2012)

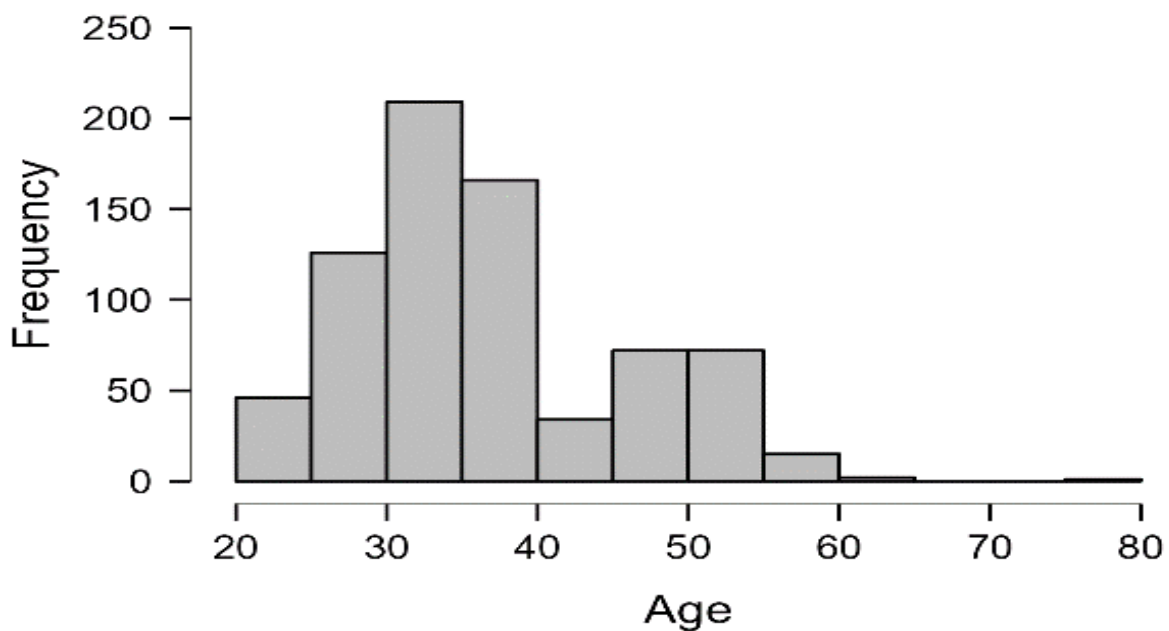


Figure 4.4: Generation X, Y & Z

4.2.1 Reliability of Measures

This section investigates the internal consistency reliability of each scale. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the Psychological Capital scale, Perceived Organisational Support Scale, Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, and Psychological Empowerment Scale. Cronbach's alpha, represented by the Greek letter α is used to examine the internal consistency or reliability of

summated rating scales (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's alpha is the most common estimate of internal consistency of items in a scale (Cronbach, 1951; Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004). Alpha measures the extent to which item responses (answers to survey questions) correlate with each other. Alpha estimates the proportion of variance that is systematic or consistent in a set of survey responses.

There has been an ongoing debate of the degree of desired consistency of a scale. A commonly reported acceptable alpha is .70 (Kaplan & Sacuzzo, 2017; Pallant, 2011; Yudhistir, 2022). While some scholars argued for a stricter alpha of .80 (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997; Smit, 1996) and .85 (Huysamen, 1996). Once the values of Alpha are at least acceptable, the researcher can proceed to further statistical test and deduction (Yudhistir, 2022). For the purposes of this study, .70 was the desired minimum alpha. Cronbach's alpha was calculated using the psych package (version 2.2.9; Revelle, 2022) in RStudio (version 2022.12.0.353). The overall internal consistency scores expressed as Cronbach's alpha of all measures are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Cronbach's alpha for the measures and subscales.

Scale	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Age</i>	-
<i>Perceived Organisational Support Scale</i>	0.82
<i>Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale</i>	0.87
<i>Psychological Capital Questionnaire</i>	0.82
<i>Hope</i>	0.79
<i>Resilience</i>	0.57
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	0.82
<i>Optimism</i>	0.53
<i>Psychological Empowerment Scale</i>	0.91
<i>Meaning</i>	0.83
<i>Competence</i>	0.91
<i>Self-determination</i>	0.76
<i>Impact</i>	0.77

The reliability indices of each scale were found to be sufficient (above .70) (Kaplan & Sacuzzo, 2017; Pallant, 2011). The Psychological Empowerment scale had the highest reliability (.91), followed by the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (.87), and the Perceived Psychological Support scale (.82) and Psychological Capital (.82). For the Psychological Capital subscales, Self-efficacy was the most reliable (.82) followed by Hope (.79). The other two, Resilience and Optimism, did not meet the minimum criteria to be considered reliable with alphas of .57 and .52, respectively. Initially, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for Resilience and Optimism were slightly lower than expected (0.57 and 0.53, respectively), but they still showed some level of internal consistency. Although not meeting the typical reliability threshold, these coefficients suggest a certain level of reliability in measuring these constructs (Sacuzzo, 2017). Resilience and optimism are essential elements of Psychological Capital, a key concept in researching employee well-being and organisational results. Not considering these sub-constructs could lead to missing out on crucial aspects of people's psychological resources, which might restrict the depth of the analysis (Creswell, 2018). In addition, while lower reliabilities may result in some measurement error, incorporating Resilience and Optimism enables a more detailed analysis of the connection between Psychological Capital and well-being outcomes. Recognising the constraints linked to these sub-constructs and carefully interpreting their findings can provide valuable insights when included in the analysis (Pallant, 2011). All the Psychological Empowerment subscales, Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact, on the other hand, exceeded the criteria with alphas of .83, .81, .76, and .77, respectively. The correlations of the items with the entire scale did not reveal problematic properties and are high (see Table 5.2).

4.2.2. Validity of Measures

To test the validity of the measures, Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012) in RStudio (version 2022.12.0.353). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a statistical method used to validate the psychological construct of a questionnaire (Brown, 2006). Typical fit statistics reported in a CFA are the chi-square statistic with the associated p-value, comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), Tucker and Lewis, (1973); Alavi, *et al.*, (2020) root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Steiger & Lind, 1980; Alavi. *et al.*, 2020) with the associated p-value, and the standardized root mean square

residual (SRMR). A reasonable fit is demonstrated by a non-significant chi-square, CFI and TLI above .90, a non-significant ($p < .05$) RMSEA of .08 or lower, and SRMR less than .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Steiger, 2007; Yu, 2002; Alavi. *et al.*, (2020). All the model-of-fit indices can be found in Table 5.6.

4.3. Inferential Statistics

Following the acceptable reliability results of the used instruments, the researcher will explore the validity thereof. It is important to note that the confidence of inference is compromised when the instruments are not reliable or valid (Yudhistir, 2022). Before the hypotheses are tested, the reliability and validity of the instruments in use are explored. Thus, following section will explore the Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

4.3.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Structural Equation Modelling was used to conduct the Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Due to the nature of the data (non-normal and ordinal), the diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) estimation was used.

- a. **The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being (WEMWB)** scale was tested as a unidimensional model and achieved mostly sufficient fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 107.93$, $df = 77$, $p = 0.012$; CFI = .993, TLI = .992). The RMSEA of the WEMWB scale was evaluated to be .023 ($p = 1.000$; 90% CI [.011, .033]), and the SRMR was evaluated to be .050, both below the recommended value of .08. indicating a good model fit.
- b. **The Perceived Organisational Support scale** was also tested as a unidimensional structure but did not meet the criteria ($\chi^2 = 402.67$, $df = 20$, $p < .001$; CFI = .865, TLI = .811). The RMSEA of the scale was .161 ($p < 0.001$; 90% CI [.147, .174]), and the SRMR was .148, both above the recommended value of .08.
- c. **The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ)** was evaluated as a second order factor structure, with subscales Hope, Resilience, Self-efficacy, and Optimism as the first order factors. The PCQ had a mostly acceptable model fit with the CFI and TLI above the acceptable threshold of .90 (CFI = .917, TLI = .908), but a significant chi-square ($\chi^2 = 706.47$, $df = 248$, $p < .001$). The RMSEA

was non-significant and below the recommended cut-off of .08 (RMSEA = .050, 90% CI [.046, .054], $p = .505$). The SRMR was .065, below the .08 threshold, indicating a good model fit.

d. The Psychological Empowerment scale was also evaluated as a second order factor structure, with subscales Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact as first order factors. The scale mostly had acceptable fit with a CFI and TLI above the acceptable threshold of .90, and above the recommended threshold of .95 (CFI = .989, TLI = .985) indicating good fit. The chi-square test, however, was found to be significant ($\chi^2 = 107.92$, $df = 50$, $p < .001$), indicating poor fit. The RMSEA was .040 and non-significant ($p = .954$, 90% CI [.029, .050]) indicating a good model fit. The SRMR was .065, indicating an acceptable fit.

Table 4.3 below illustrate the factor loadings of each item and subscale on their respective subscales and scales. Most of the items statistically significantly and adequately loaded onto their respective subscales. However, the Resilience subscale had all its items non-significantly load onto the scale. Similarly, the scale itself did not significantly load onto the Psychological Capital scale. Thus, the researcher notes that, resilience subscale should be interpreted with caution. Furthermore, while significant, two items of the Optimism subscale had beta coefficients below .20, and one was even negative after reverse scoring.

Table 4.3

CFA Item Factor Loadings of each scale

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p-value	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Std. Loading Value	Beta
Perceived Organisational Support								
pos01	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.81	0.48
pos02r	1.93	0.13	14.64	0.00	1.67	2.19	1.57	0.73
pos03r	1.83	0.13	14.54	0.00	1.58	2.07	1.49	0.71
pos04	0.95	0.08	11.71	0.00	0.79	1.11	0.77	0.40
pos05r	2.08	0.14	14.83	0.00	1.80	2.35	1.69	0.77
pos06	1.20	0.09	13.13	0.00	1.02	1.38	0.98	0.53
pos07r	1.86	0.13	14.64	0.00	1.61	2.11	1.51	0.71
pos08	0.98	0.08	11.96	0.00	0.82	1.14	0.80	0.42

Well-being								
wb01	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.51	0.54
wb02	0.80	0.06	13.64	0.00	0.68	0.91	0.40	0.33
wb03	1.09	0.07	16.49	0.00	0.96	1.22	0.55	0.53
wb04	1.12	0.07	16.07	0.00	0.98	1.26	0.57	0.50
wb05	1.06	0.07	15.99	0.00	0.93	1.19	0.54	0.56
wb06	1.00	0.06	16.25	0.00	0.88	1.13	0.51	0.54
wb07	0.98	0.06	16.44	0.00	0.87	1.10	0.50	0.67
wb08	0.91	0.06	16.09	0.00	0.80	1.03	0.46	0.71
wb09	1.16	0.07	16.75	0.00	1.03	1.30	0.59	0.67
wb10	0.97	0.06	16.31	0.00	0.86	1.09	0.49	0.73
wb11	0.87	0.06	15.63	0.00	0.76	0.97	0.44	0.60
wb12	1.01	0.06	16.47	0.00	0.89	1.13	0.51	0.63
wb13	1.03	0.06	16.55	0.00	0.90	1.15	0.52	0.69
wb14	1.12	0.07	16.90	0.00	0.99	1.25	0.57	0.71
Psychological Capital								
Self-efficacy	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.81	0.81
Hope	1.14	0.09	12.87	0.00	0.97	1.31	0.94	0.94
Resilience	0.06	0.04	1.42	0.16	-0.02	0.14	0.52	0.52
Optimism	0.78	0.07	11.69	0.00	0.65	0.91	0.83	0.83
<i>Self-efficacy</i>								
cap01	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.67	0.56
cap02	1.03	0.07	15.73	0.00	0.90	1.15	0.69	0.71
cap03	1.09	0.07	15.60	0.00	0.95	1.22	0.73	0.66
cap04	1.12	0.07	15.82	0.00	0.98	1.26	0.75	0.75
cap05	1.14	0.07	15.38	0.00	1.00	1.29	0.77	0.55
cap06	1.19	0.08	15.86	0.00	1.05	1.34	0.80	0.72
<i>Hope</i>								
cap07	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.66	0.54
cap08	1.08	0.07	16.20	0.00	0.95	1.21	0.72	0.72
cap09	1.10	0.07	15.82	0.00	0.96	1.24	0.73	0.63
cap10	1.25	0.08	16.08	0.00	1.10	1.40	0.83	0.62
cap11	1.09	0.07	16.07	0.00	0.96	1.23	0.72	0.66
cap12	1.12	0.07	15.37	0.00	0.98	1.27	0.74	0.53
<i>Resilience</i>								
cap13r	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.06	0.04
cap14	10.42	7.36	1.42	0.16	-4.01	24.85	0.64	0.48
cap15	10.56	7.47	1.42	0.16	-4.07	25.19	0.65	0.44
cap16	8.47	6.00	1.41	0.16	-3.28	20.23	0.52	0.34
cap17	11.26	7.95	1.42	0.16	-4.33	26.85	0.70	0.48
cap18	13.83	9.76	1.42	0.16	-5.30	32.96	0.85	0.70
<i>Optimism</i>								
cap19	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.51	0.36
cap20r	-0.24	0.07	-3.60	0.00	-0.37	-0.11	-0.12	-0.08
cap21	1.34	0.11	12.51	0.00	1.13	1.55	0.69	0.56
cap22	1.33	0.11	12.16	0.00	1.12	1.54	0.68	0.47

cap23r	0.30	0.07	4.40	0.00	0.17	0.44	0.16	0.09
cap24	1.47	0.12	12.77	0.00	1.25	1.70	0.75	0.60
Psychological Empowerment								
Meaning	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.91	0.91
Competence	0.92	0.06	16.40	0.00	0.81	1.03	0.93	0.93
Self-determination	1.17	0.07	16.89	0.00	1.03	1.30	0.86	0.86
Impact	1.28	0.08	16.78	0.00	1.13	1.43	0.86	0.86
<i>Meaning</i>								
emp02	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.75	0.75
emp05	1.23	0.06	19.18	0.00	1.11	1.36	0.93	0.84
emp10	1.12	0.06	18.68	0.00	1.00	1.23	0.84	0.77
<i>Competence</i>								
emp01	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.67	0.69
emp09	1.33	0.07	18.80	0.00	1.19	1.46	0.89	0.83
emp12	1.20	0.07	18.30	0.00	1.07	1.33	0.81	0.78
<i>Self-determination</i>								
emp03	1.00				1.00	1.00	0.92	0.78
emp07	1.06	0.06	18.38	0.00	0.95	1.17	0.98	0.60
emp08	1.14	0.06	19.54	0.00	1.03	1.26	1.05	0.75
<i>Impact</i>								
emp04	1.00				1.00	1.00	1.02	0.75
emp06	1.00	0.05	19.88	0.00	0.90	1.10	1.03	0.73
emp11	0.94	0.05	19.14	0.00	0.84	1.04	0.96	0.69

4.4 Structural Equation Modelling

Three mediation models were tested for model fit using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The three models all had well-being as the dependent variable and the generational cohorts as the mediating variable. Each model had a differing independent variable: Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support, and Psychological Capital. The same fit statistics used in the CFA will be evaluated in the SEM. Structural Equation Modelling also calculates regression coefficients. The lavaan package Rosseel, (2012) in R-Studio (version 2022.12.0.353) was used to construct the structural equation models. Before regression and correlation, the following assumptions have to be conducted.

4.5 ASSUMPTIONS

Parametric statistical tests require some assumptions to be met before testing. This section tests the assumptions of the data to determine the adequacy of the proposed statistical procedures - Pearson's correlation, linear regression, and choice of estimator in the structural equation modelling.

Pearson's correlation requires the data to be at the continuous level of measurement and normally distributed (Pallant, 2011). Linear regression requires linearity, homoscedasticity, and normally distributed residuals. For structural equation modelling, the most widely utilized estimation technique is maximum likelihood (Li, 2015). However, maximum likelihood (ML) requires continuous data that is normally distributed. Diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS), however, is designed for ordinal data, such as Likert-type scales, and does not require the assumption of normality to be met (Li, 2015).

4.5.1 Normality

Investigations into the normality of each variable will be conducted through the examination of the Shapiro-Wilk test (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965), Skewness Z-score (Field, 2009), and histograms. Skewness Z-score (Skew Z) is calculated by dividing the skewness by the standard error of the skewness. A Skew Z greater than $|1.98|$ is statistically significant (Field, 2009). The results indicate that there is little evidence to support the hypotheses that the data are normally distributed (see **Figure 5.1 to 5.9**) and is recommended to treat them as such.

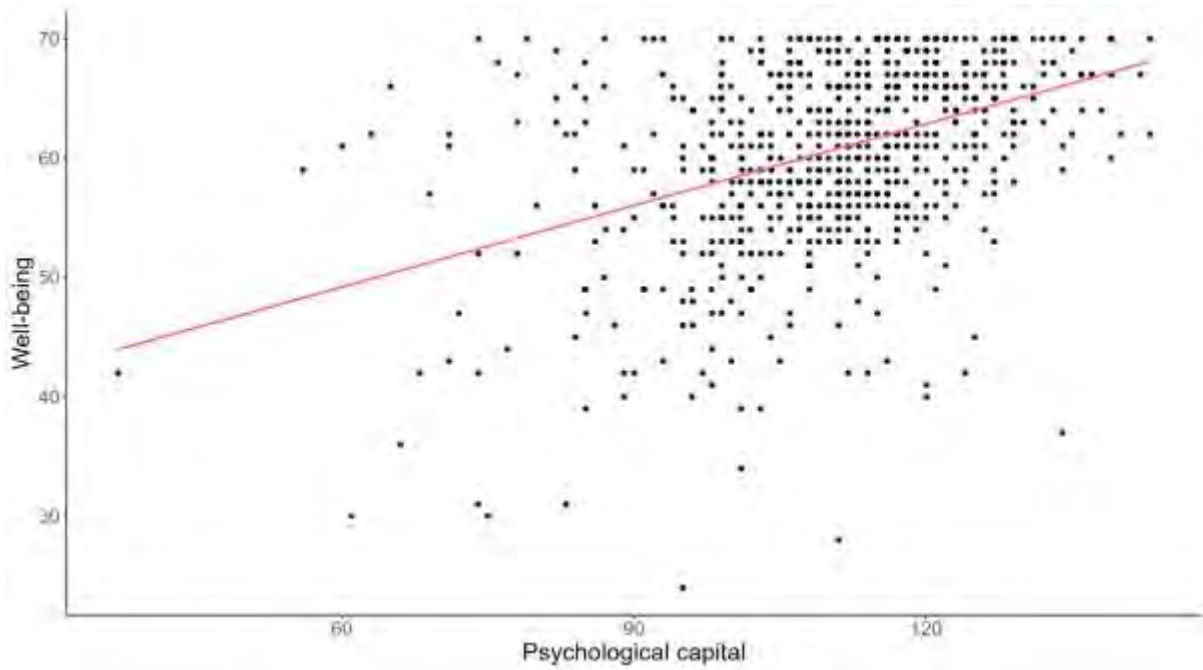


Figure 4.5 *Linearity Plots: wellbeing and psychological capital*

Figure 4.5, This plot is the predicted vs residuals plot where well-being is the dependent variable and Psychological Capital, and year of birth are entered as independent variables. The plot seems to violate homoscedasticity given the downward slope in the top half.

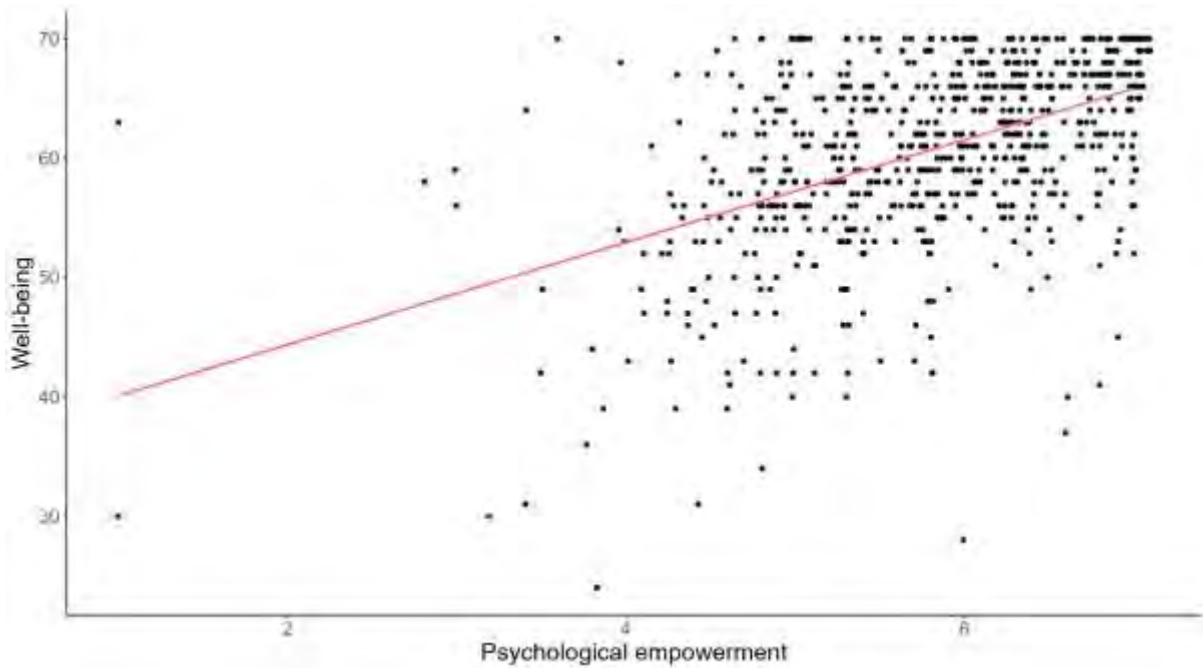


Figure 4.6 Linearity Plots: wellbeing and psychological empowerment

Figure 4.6 This plot is the predicted vs residuals plot where well-being is the dependent variable and Psychological Empowerment, and year of birth are entered as independent variables. The plot seems to violate homoscedasticity given the downward slope in the top half.

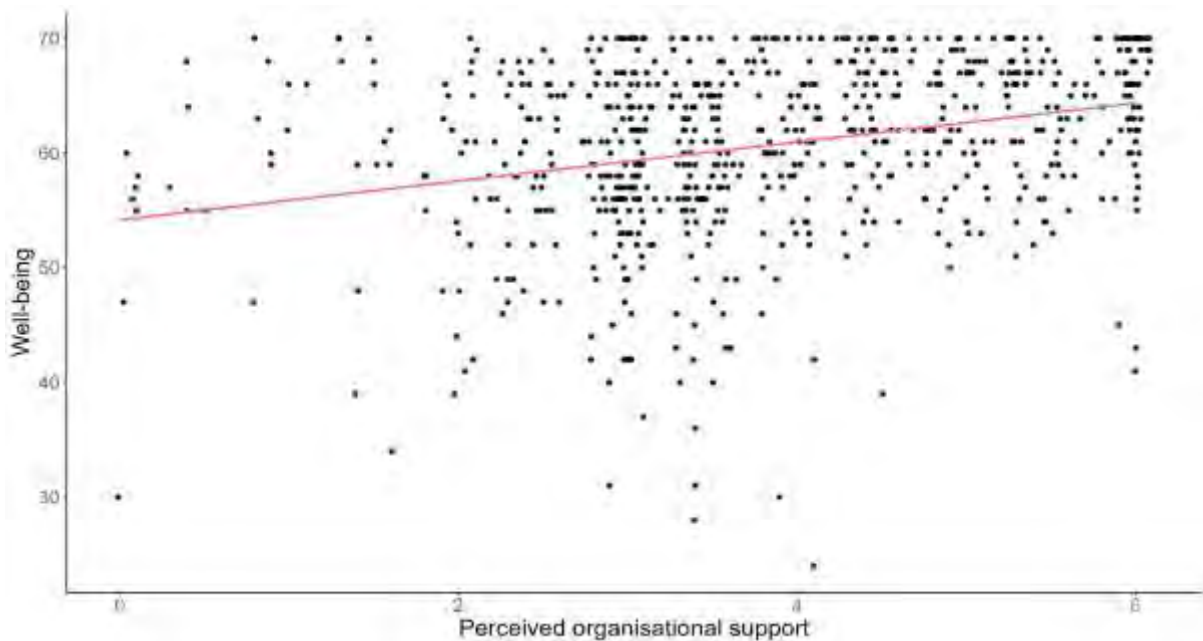


Figure 4.7: Linearity Plots: Wellbeing and Perceived Organisational Support

Figure 4.7. This plot is the predicted vs residuals plot where well-being is the dependent variable and Perceived Organisational Support, and year of birth are entered as independent variables. The plot seems to violate homoscedasticity given the downward slope in the top half.

The above graphs indicate the Homoscedasticity across the variables. Homoscedasticity occurs when the variance is similar across the values of the independent variable and can be assessed through a residual vs predicted plot (Goss-Sampson, 2022). There seems to be a linear correlation relationship between these variables.

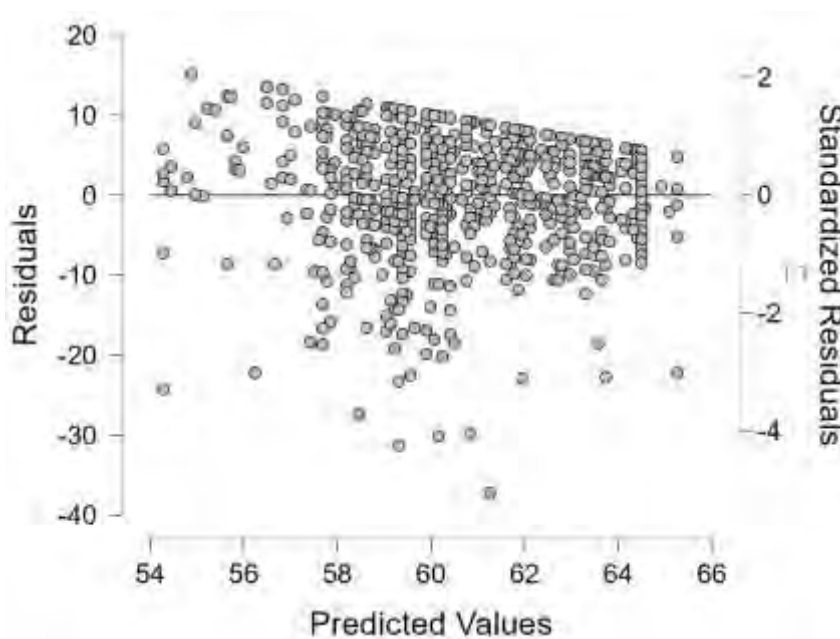


Figure 4.8 *Well-being and Psychological Capital*

The plot in figure 4.8 is the predicted vs residuals plot where Well-being is the dependent variable and Psychological Capital, and year of birth are entered as independent variables. The plot seems to violate homoscedasticity given the downward slope in the top half.

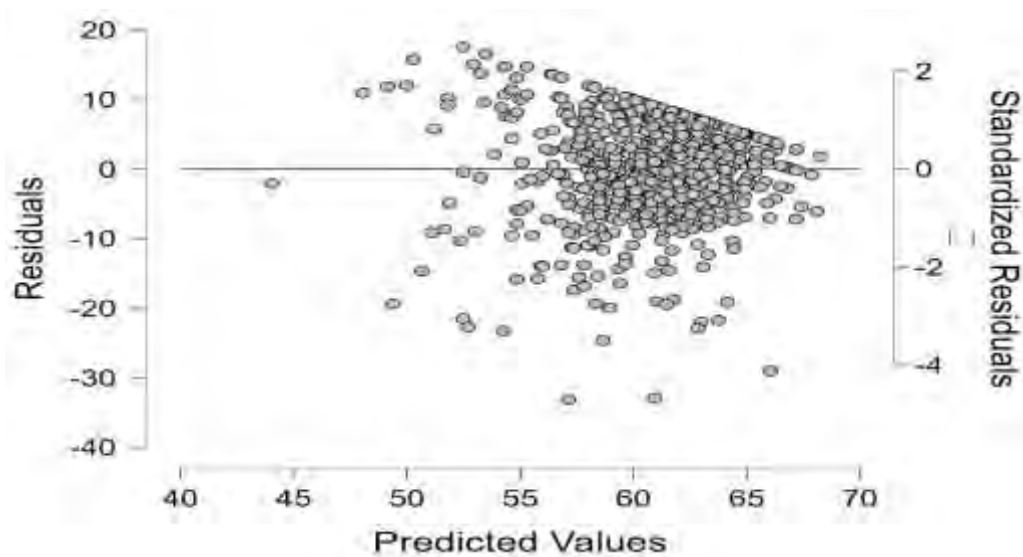


Figure 4.9 *Well-being and Psychological Empowerment*

The plot in figure 4.9 is the predicted vs residuals plot where Well-being is the dependent variable and Psychological Empowerment, and year of birth are entered as independent variables. The plot seems to violate homoscedasticity given the downward slope in the top half.

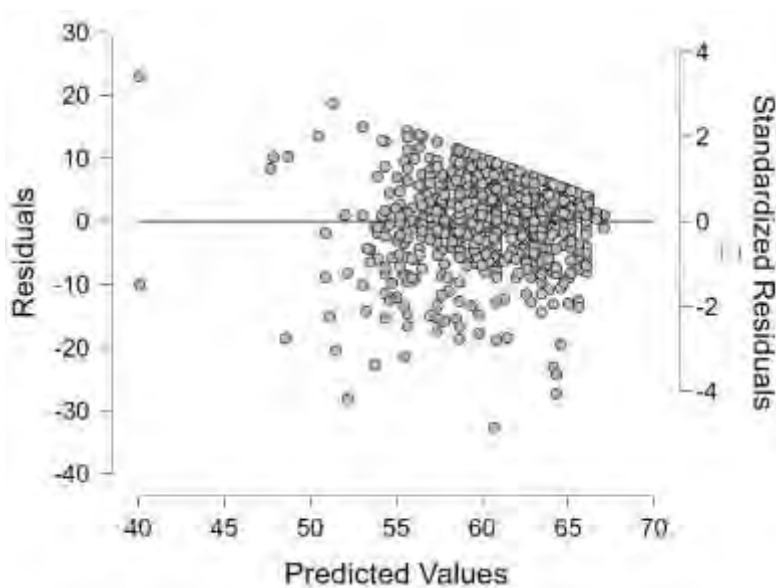


Figure 4.10 *Well-being and Perceived Organisational Support*

The plot in figure 4.10 is the predicted vs residuals plot where well-being is the dependent variable and Perceived Organisational Support, and year of birth are

entered as independent variables. The plot seems to violate homoscedasticity given the downward slope in the top half.

4.5.2 Residual Distribution (Assumptions of regression)

The Q-Q plot and histogram of residuals can be used to assess whether the residuals of a regression are normally distributed. The following graphs illustrates residual distribution across all the variables.

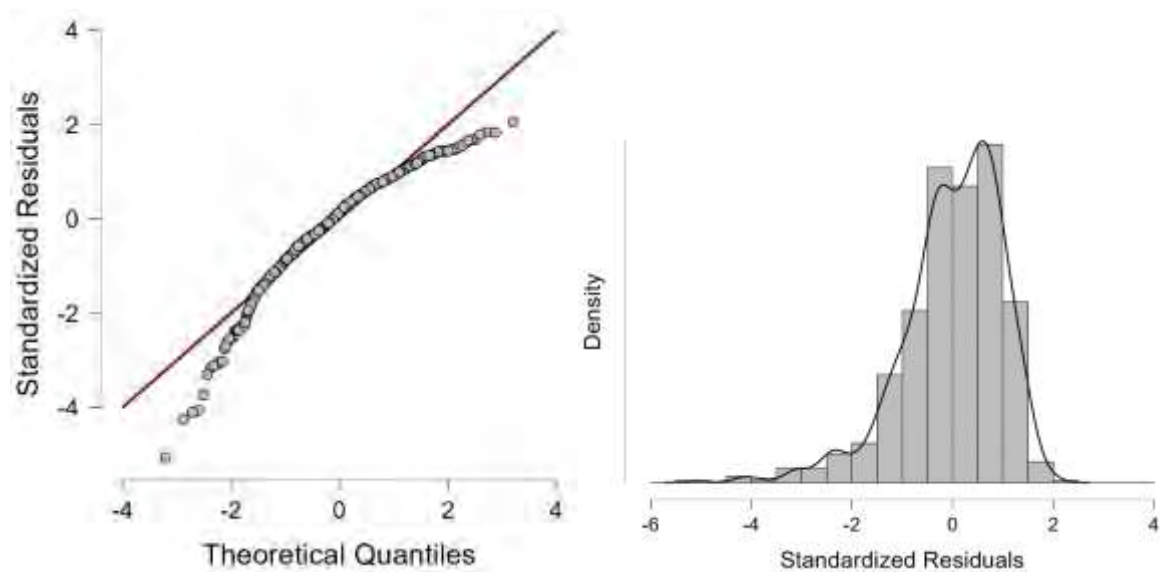


Figure 4.11 *Well-being and Perceived Organisational Support*

The above plots are the Q-Q plot and histogram of the residuals of the regression model where well-being is the dependent variable and Perceived Organisational Support, and year of birth are the independent variables. The evaluation of these plots can also be subjective. While the histogram appears normal, the Q-Q plot suggests deviation from normal.

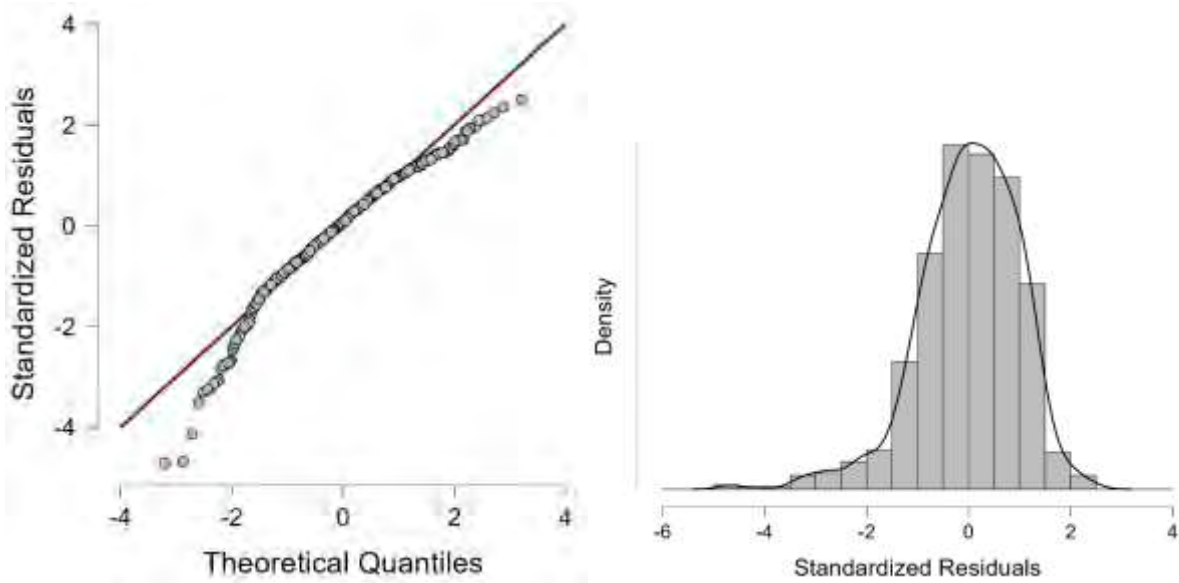


Figure 4.12 *Well-being and Psychological Capital*

The above plots are the Q-Q plot and histogram of the residuals of the regression model where well-being is the dependent variable and Psychological Capital, and year of birth are the independent variables. The evaluation of these plots can also be subjective. While the histogram appears normal, the Q-Q plot suggests some deviation from normal.

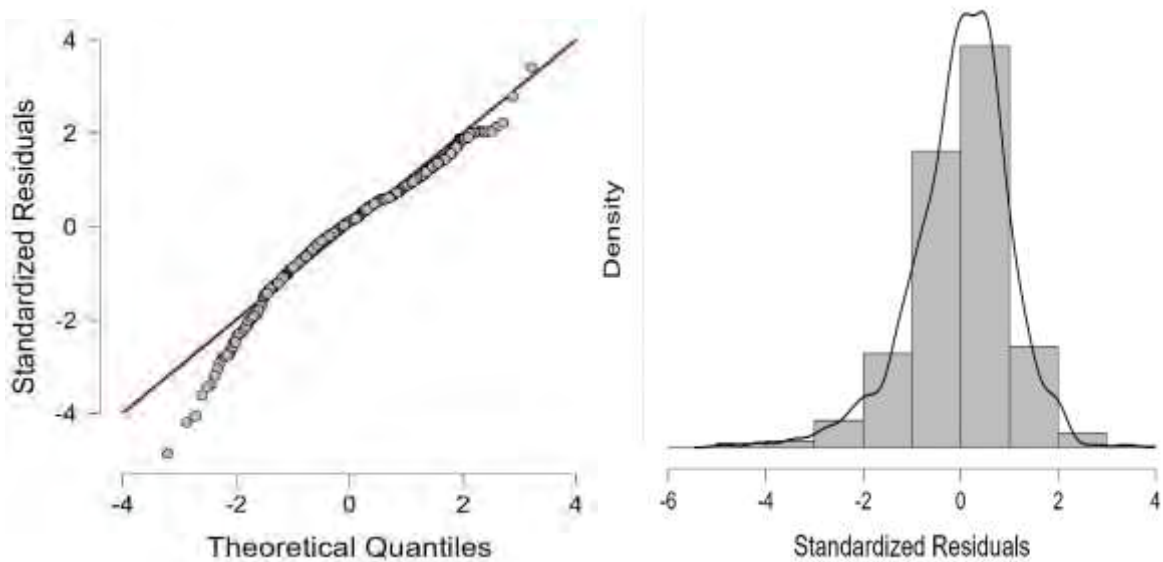


Figure 4.13 *Well-being and Psychological Empowerment*

The above plots are the Q-Q plot and histogram of the residuals of the regression model where well-being is the dependent variable and Psychological Empowerment, and year of birth are the independent variables. The evaluation of these plots can also

be subjective. While the histogram appears normal, the Q-Q plot suggests deviation from normal.

Table 4.4*CFA model fit statistics per scale*

CFA model fit statistics per scale													
	Type	Chi-square	Df	chi/df	chi value	p-	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMSEA lower	RMSEA upper	RMSEA p-value	SRMR
Perceived Organisational Support scale	Unidimensional	402.67	20	20.1	0.000		0.865	0.811	0.161	0.147	0.174	0.000	0.148
Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale	Unidimensional	107.93	77	1.4	0.012		0.993	0.992	0.023	0.011	0.033	1.000	0.050
Psychological Capital Questionnaire	2nd order	706.47	248	2.8	0.000		0.917	0.908	0.050	0.046	0.054	0.505	0.065
Psychological Empowerment Scale	2nd order	107.92	50	2.2	0.000		0.989	0.985	0.040	0.029	0.050	0.954	0.065

Table 4.5*Structural equation modelling results*

	Chi-square	df	chi/df	chi p-value	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMSEA lower	RMSEA upper	RMSEA p-value	SRMR
Psychological Empowerment Scale	513.312	322	1.59	0.000	0.986	0.985	0.028	0.024	0.033	1.000	0.056
Survey of Organisational Support Scale	790.576	228	3.47	0.000	0.933	0.926	0.058	0.053	0.062	0.002	0.073
Psychological Capital Questionnaire	1556.056	700	2.22	0.000	0.935	0.932	0.041	0.038	0.043	1.000	0.063

4.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSTRUCTS

Now that the reliability and validity as well assumptions explored, inferential analysis will follow. This section aims to address the hypotheses regarding the assumed relationships between the constructs of Perceived Organisational Support, Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, well-being and generation cohort. First, correlations were calculated and secondly, Multiple regression analysis was conducted using Barron and Kenny test for mediation analysis. Additionally, Structural Equation Modelling was conducted to test the proposed model fit.

4.6.1 Spearman's Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis assesses the strength and direction of the relationship between variables (Pallant, 2011). Two widely used statistical techniques used to examine correlation are Pearson's and Spearman's correlation coefficients. Pearson's correlation is a parametric test that requires continuous, normally distributed data (Pallant, 2011). Spearman's rho measures the strength of association between two variables (Pallant, 2011). Compared to the Pearson correlation coefficient, the Spearman correlation does not require continuous-level data (interval or ratio), because it uses ranks instead of assumptions about the distributions of the two variables (Lani, 2010; Solutions, 2016). This allows us to analyse the association between variables of ordinal measurement levels. Moreover, the Spearman correlation does not assume that the variables are normally distributed (Pallant, 2011; Solutions, 2016). Given this discussion, it is clear that, a Spearman correlation analysis can therefore be used in many cases in which the assumptions of the Pearson correlation (continuous-level variables, linearity, heteroscedasticity, and normality) are not met.

This research used Likert-type scale instruments, technically, Likert-type data is ordinal data and summing or averaging that ordinal data does not make it interval data (Boone, 2016; Sondergeld & Johnson, 2014). Likert-type data is non-linear (Boone, 2016). Thus, this research opted to utilize Spearman Correlation instead of Pearson correlation to test the relationship between variables. According to

Cohen (1988), a small correlation ranges from .10 to .29, medium from .30 to .49, and large from .50 to 1.0.

The results in Table 4.6 indicate that the dependent variable, Well-being, significantly and positively correlates with the predictor variables, Perceived Organisational Support ($\rho = .31, p < .001$), Empowerment ($\rho = .47, p < .001$), and Psychological capital ($\rho = .39, p < .001$). However, Well-being does not have a correlation with the mediation variable, generation cohort (Age) ($\rho = -.01, p = .799$). Similarly, generation cohorts do not significantly correlate with the predictor variables, Perceived Organisational Support ($\rho = .01, p = .848$), Psychological Empowerment ($\rho = .05, p = .225$). However, there is a statistically significant small negative correlation between generation cohort (Age) and Psychological Capital ($\rho = -.15, p < .001$). Due to the absence of correlations between the expected mediation variable and the dependent and independent variables, it is unlikely that there will be a significant mediation effect (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Matthews *et al.*, 2022).

Table 4.6

Spearman's (rho) Correlation Analysis Results

SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION	1	2	3	3 A	3 B	3 C	3 D	4	4 A	4 B	4 C	4 D
1. AGE	-											
2. PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT	0	-										
3. EMPOWERMENT	0	0	-									
3A. MEANING	0	0	0	-								
3B. COMPETENCE	0	0	0	0	-							

3C. SELF- DETER- MINATI ON	0	0	0	0	0	-						
	.07	.20	.85	.57	.58							
	*	*	*	*	*							
	*	*	*	*	*							
3D. IMPACT	0	0	0	0	0	0	-					
	.13	.25	.87	.62	.61	.62						
	*	*	*	*	*	*						
	*	*	*	*	*	*						
4. PSYCH OLOGICAL CAPITAL	-0.01	.26	.45	.39	.40	.38	.36					
	.05	.61	.59	.90	.08	.86	.61					
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*					
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*					
4A. HOPE	-0.06	.18	.44	.37	.38	.37	.37	.73				
	.06	.84	.47	.77	.88	.77	.88	.31				
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*				
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*				
4B. RESILIENCE	-0.16	.44	.41	.55	.88	.33	.44	.88	.60			
	.06	.41	.41	.55	.88	.33	.44	.88	.60			
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
4C. SELF- EFFICACY	-0.03	.10	.23	.21	.20	.21	.18	.60	.28	.29		
	.03	.10	.23	.21	.20	.21	.18	.60	.28	.29		
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
4D. OPTIMISM	-0.09	.30	.66	.66	.51	.20	.63	.33	.43	.43		
	.09	.30	.66	.66	.51	.20	.63	.33	.43	.43		
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
5. WELL- BEING	-0.01	.33	.47	.37	.43	.39	.41	.39	.67	.76	.66	
	.01	.33	.47	.37	.43	.39	.41	.39	.67	.76	.66	
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

* P < .05, ** P < .01, *** P < .001

4.6.2 Mediation Analysis

Different statistical techniques were used to analyse the mediating effect of generational cohorts. First, a multiple regression analysis was conducted following the Barron and Kenny steps. Secondly, SEM was used to investigate mediation.

4.6.2.1 Multiple regression and Correlations

Multiple regression and Part and Partial correlations was conducted to evaluate the contribution of Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Perceived Organisational Support in predicting Employee Well-being. All variables were entered as average scores.

The multiple regression analysis (Table 4.8) exhibited a significant overall model fit, $F(3, 739) = 105, p < .001$, with an R^2 value of .300, indicating that 30% of the variance in employee well-being was accounted for by the predictors. As indicated in Table 5.7, Perceived organisational support least predictor of employee well-being ($\beta = .058, p < .001$) with R^2 value of 0.017, indicating that 1,7% of the R squared variance. While Psychological empowerment was largest predictor ($\beta = .219, p < .001$) with R^2 value of 0.093, accounting for 9.3% of the variance, and psychological capital ($\beta = .211, p < .001$) with R^2 value of 0.040, indicating that 4% of the variance.

Table 4.7

Model Fit Measures (Well-being)

R	R^2	Adjusted- R^2	Overall Model Test			
			F	df1	df2	P
0.547	0.300	0.297	105	3	739	< .001

Table 4.8

Multiple regression (Well-being)

PREDICTOR	Estimate (beta)	Standardize	S.E.	S.E.	95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL		T	p
					Lower	Upper		

	al							R ²
INTERCEPT	1.863			0.	1.	2.	1	<
				1	57	1	2.	.0
				4	1	5	5	0
				9		5	3	1
PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL	0.211	.223	.0	0.	0.	0.	6.	<
			40	0	14	2	4	.0
				3	7	7	7	0
				3		6		1
PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT	0.219	.347	.0	0.	0.	0.	9.	<
			93	0	17	2	9	.0
				2	6	6	0	0
				2		3		1
PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT	0.058	.139	.0	0.	0.	0.	4.	<
			17	0	03	0	2	.0
				1	1	8	8	0
				3		4		1

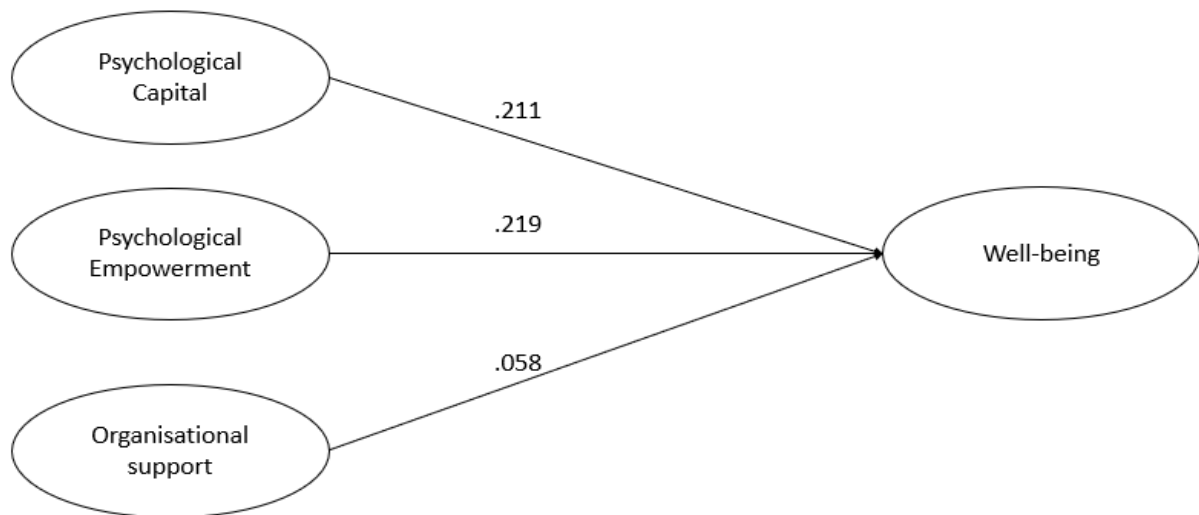


Figure 4.14: Multiple regression (Well-being)

Following Baron and Kenny’s (1986) approach to detecting mediation, multiple regression was conducted. A theoretical explanation step by step explanation will be given below, followed by the results thereof.

- a. **Step 1** - Establish a significant relationship between **X** and **Y**
- b. **Step 2** - Establish a significant relationship between X and M
- c. **Step 3** - Establish a significant relationship between M and Y controlling for X.

d. **Step 4** - Assess the reduction in the relationship between X and Y when M is included (Compare the coefficient of X from Step 1 with Step 3. If X from Step 3 is smaller than X from Step 1 and no longer significant then M has a mediation effect).

a. **Psychological Capital**

The table 4.9 indicates that there is a direct relationship between Psychological Capital and Well-being ($\beta = .386, p < .001$), and between Psychological Capital and the generational cohorts ($\beta = .136, p < .001$). However, while controlling for Psychological Capital, no relationship exists between Generational cohort and Well-being ($\beta = -.010, p = .779$) and Psychological Capital remained significant ($\beta = .388, p < .001$). This suggests that Generational cohort does not mediate the relationship between Psychological Capital and Well-being since no statically significant difference exists between the betas of Psychological Capital between steps 1 and 3 as shown in Figure 5.10.

Table 4.9

Regression coefficients of Psychological Capital (X) and Generational cohort (M) on Well-being (Y)

	Predicted variable	Predictor variable(s)	Estimate (β)	P
Step 1	Well-being (Y)	Psychological Capital (X)	0.386	< .001
Step 2	Generational cohort (M)	Psychological Capital (X)	0.136	< .001
Step 3	Well-being (Y)	Generational cohort (M)	-0.010	.779
		Psychological Capital (X)	0.388	< .001
Step 4	Change in Psychological Capital's estimate between steps 1 and 3		-0.002	

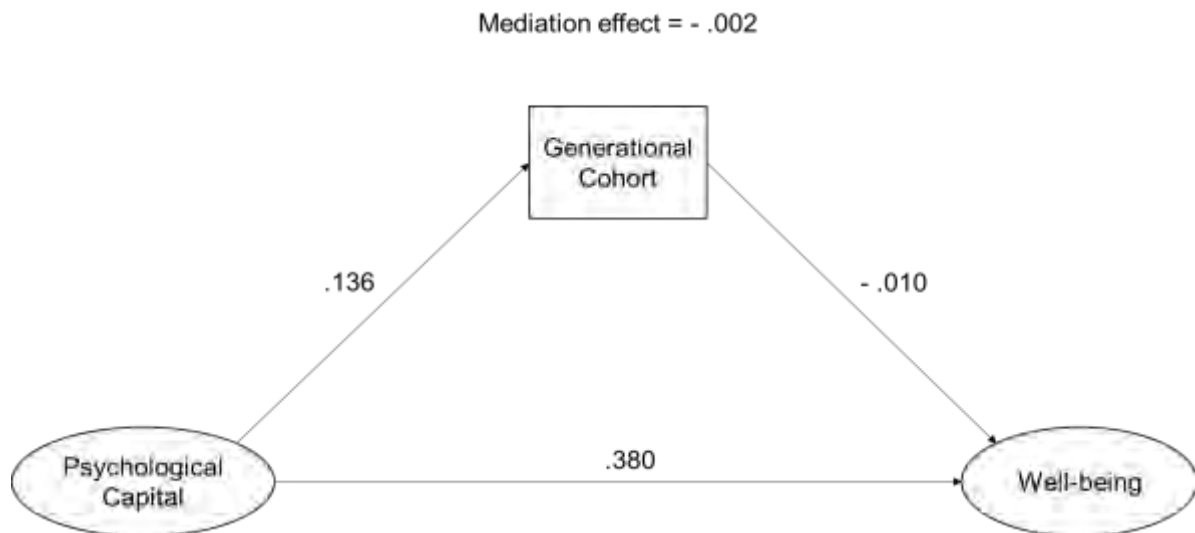


Figure 4.15: Psychological Capital (*X*) and Generational cohort (*M*) on Well-being (*Y*)

b. Psychological Empowerment

The table 4.10 indicates that there is a direct relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Well-being ($\beta = .307, p < .001$). No significant relationship was found between Psychological Empowerment and generational cohort ($\beta = -.034, p = .144$). Furthermore, while controlling for Psychological Empowerment, a small relationship exists between generational cohort and Well-being ($\beta = .076, p = .018$), and Psychological Empowerment remained significant ($\beta = .310, p < .001$). This suggests that Generational cohort does not mediate the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Well-being since no difference exists between the beta of Psychological Empowerment between steps 1 and 3 as shown in Figure 4.11.

Table 4.10

Regression coefficients of Psychological Empowerment (X) and Generational cohort (M) on Well-being (Y)

	Predicted variable	Predictor variable(s)	Estimate (β)	P
Step 1	Well-being (Y)	Psychological Empowerment (X)	0.307	< .001
Step 2	Generational cohort (M)	Psychological Empowerment (X)	-0.034	.144
Step 3	Well-being (Y)	Generational cohort (M)	0.076	.018
		Psychological Empowerment (X)	0.310	< .001
Step 4	Change in estimate between steps 1 and 3	Psychological Empowerment's	-0.003	

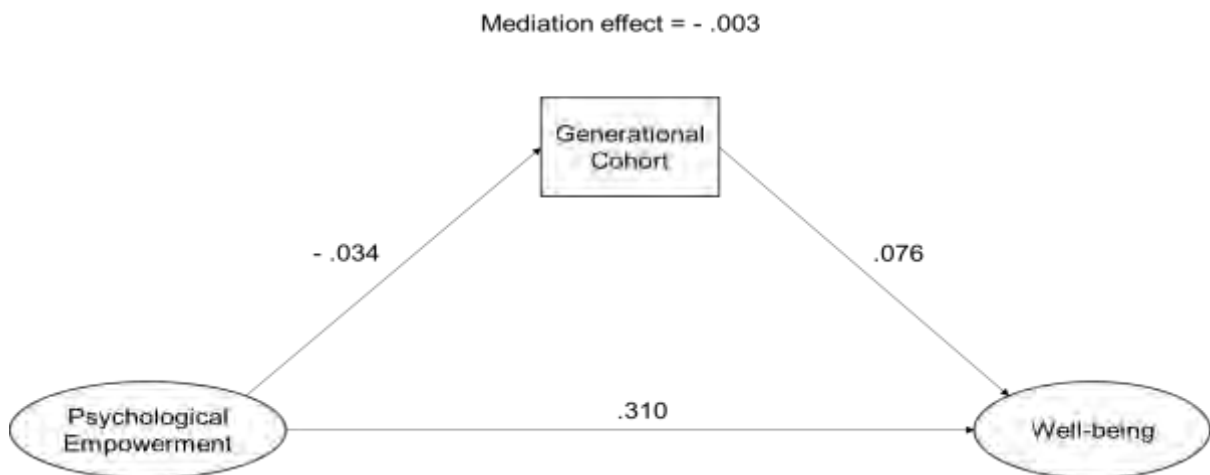


Figure 4.16: Psychological Empowerment (X) and Generational cohort (M) on Well-being (Y)

c. Organisational Support

The table 5.11, indicates that there is a direct relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being ($\beta = .121$, $p < .001$). No significant relationship was found between Perceived Organisational Support and the generational cohorts ($\beta = -.009$, $p = .536$). Furthermore, while controlling for Perceived Organisational Support, no relationship exists between Generational cohort and Well-being ($\beta = .056$, $p = .110$), and Perceived Organisational Support remained significant ($\beta = .122$, $p < .001$). This suggests that Generational cohort does not mediate the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being since no statistically significant difference exists between the betas of Perceived Organisational Support between steps 1 and 3 as shown in Figure 4.12.

Table 4.11

Regression coefficients of Perceived Organisational Support (X) and Generational cohort (M) on Well-being (Y)

	Predicted variable	Predictor variable(s)	Estimate (beta)	p
Step 1	Well-being (Y)	Perceived Organisational Support (X)	0.121	< .001
Step 2	Generational cohort (M)	Perceived Organisational Support (X)	-0.009	0.536
Step 3	Well-being (Y)	Generational cohort (M)	0.056	0.110
		Perceived Organisational Support (X)	0.122	< .001
Step 4	Change in estimate between steps 1 and 3	Perceived Organisational Support's	-0.001	

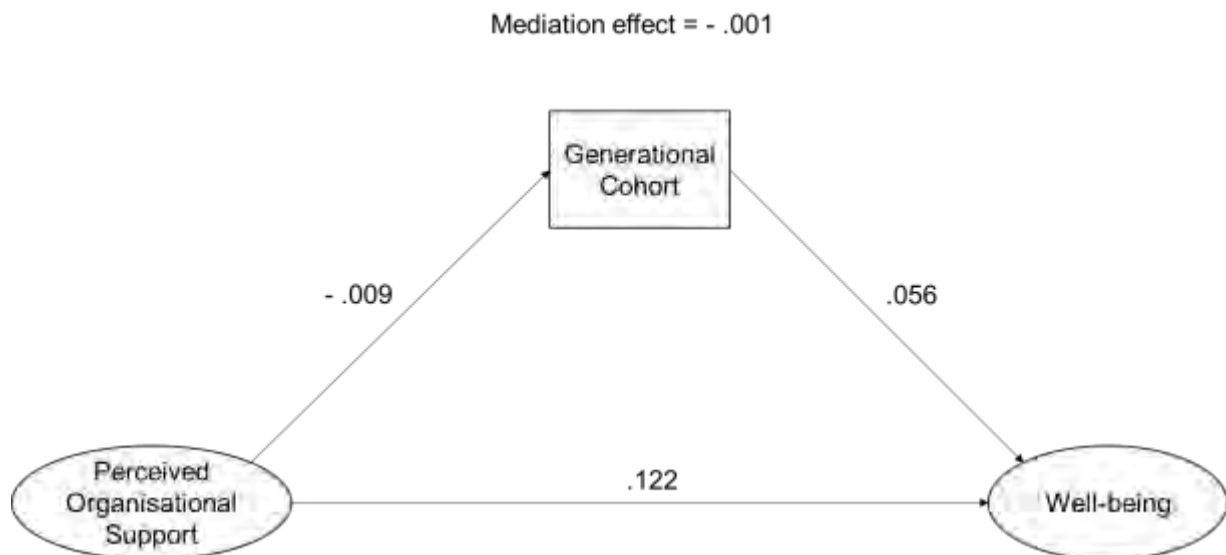


Figure 4.17: Perceived Organisational Support (*X*) and Generational cohort (*M*) on Well-being (*Y*)

4.6.2.2 Structural Equation Modelling

Three mediation models were tested for model fit using structural equation modelling. The three models all had Well-being as the independent variable and the generational cohorts as the mediating variable. Each model had a differing dependent variable: Psychological empowerment, Organisational support, and Psychological capital.

The table 4.7 shows the fit statistics of the three models. Similar to the CFAs conducted, the three models had acceptable fit statistics, except for chi-square. The beta coefficients for each model are presented below. Regression is depicted with a tilde (the ~ symbol) with the dependent variable to the left of the tilde and the independent variable to the right.

Table 4.12. indicates that there is a direct positive relationship between Psychological Capital and Well-being ($\beta = .412, p < .001$), and between Psychological Capital and the generational cohorts ($\beta = .142, p < .001$). However, while controlling for Psychological Capital, no relationship exists between Generational cohort and Well-being ($\beta = -.011, p = .753$). Furthermore, the indirect effect of Psychological Capital on Well-being through Generational cohort was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.003, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.008, .005], p = .628$). This suggests that

Generational cohort does not mediate the relationship between Psychological Capital and Well-being.

Table 4.12

Psychological Capital, Well-being and Generational cohort

	BET A	P- VALU E	95% CI LOWE R	95% CI UPPE R
WELL-BEING PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL	0.48 3	< .001	0.462	0.503
GENERATIONAL COHORT PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL	0.12 8	< .001	0.095	0.162
WELL-BEING GENERATIONAL COHORT	- 0.02 3	.226	-0.060	0.014
INDIRECT MEDIATION	- 0.00 3	.262	-0.008	0.002

Results in table 4.13: indicate that there is a direct positive relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Well-being ($\beta = .488$, $p < .001$), a slight positive relationship between Generational Cohort and Well-being ($\beta = .054$, $p = .004$), and a slight negative relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Generational cohort ($\beta = -.030$, $p = .046$). Furthermore, the indirect effect of Psychological Empowerment on Well-being through Generational cohort was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.002$, 95% CI [-.004, .001], $p = .168$). This suggests that Generational Cohort does not mediate the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Well-being.

Table 4.13*Psychological Empowerment, Well-being and Generational cohort*

	BET A	P- VALU E	95% CI LOWE R	95% CI UPPE R
WELL-BEING PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT	0.54 1	< .001	0.521	0.561
GENERATIONAL COHORT PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT	- 0.03 0	.046	-0.059	- 0.001
WELL-BEING GENERATIONAL COHORT	0.05 4	.004	0.017	0.090
INDIRECT MEDIATION	- 0.00 2	.168	-0.004	0.001

Results in table 4.14 indicate that there is a direct positive relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being ($\beta = .323$, $p < .001$), and a slight positive relationship between Generational Cohort and Well-being. No statistically significant relationship exists between Perceived Organisational Support and Generational Cohort ($\beta = -.028$, $p = .178$). Furthermore, the indirect effect of Perceived Organisational Support on Well-being through Generational Cohort was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.001$, 95% CI [-.004, .001], $p = .300$).

Table 4.14

Perceived Organisational Support, Well-being and Generational cohort

	BETA	P-VALUE	95% CI LOWER	95% CI UPPER
WELL-BEING ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT	0.323	< .001	0.302	.344
GENERATIONAL COHORT ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT	-0.028	.178	-0.069	0.013
WELL-BEING GENERATIONAL COHORT	0.045	.012	0.010	0.081
INDIRECT MEDIATION	-0.001	.300	-0.004	0.001

4.7 Generational Cohort as a Mediator

The results in Table 5.10 of the three models evaluating the extent of Generational Cohort as a mediator between Psychological Capital and Well-being, Psychological Empowerment and Well-being, and Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being. These findings suggest that the generational cohort to which one belongs to, does not mediate these relationships.

4.8 Differences Between the Cohorts: ANOVA Findings

A one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate whether any statistically significant differences exist between the three age groups for each variable.

4.8.1 Assumptions

- General parametric assumptions still apply; and
- Homogeneity of variance

- Levine's test

4.8.2 Levine's test

Table: 4.15

The results of the Levine's test are provided.

Variable	F	df1	df2	p	Violation
Well-being	3.023	2	740	.049	Yes
Empowerment	0.636	2	740	.530	No
Capital	2.555	2	740	.078	No
Org support	0.226	2	740	.798	No

The results of the Levine's tests for each variable indicate that Well-being violates the assumption of homogeneity of variance. For this variable, it is recommended to use the Brown-Forsythe (BF) and Welch (W) results in place of the standard ANOVA results (Pallant, 2011).

4.8.1.1 Effect sizes

ANOVA is able to indicate if there is a statistically significant difference between groups. However, it does not indicate the magnitude of the difference. For this, effect sizes are sought. Typically used effect sizes when investigating the difference between groups are Cohen's d (Cohen, 1969) for two groups, and eta-squared (η^2 ; Fisher, 1928; Pearson, 1911). Cohen (1988) provides the following guidelines for the interpretation of Cohen's d and eta-squared,

a. Cohen's d:

- Negligible: $d < 0.20$
- Small: $0.20 \leq d < 0.50$
- Moderate: $0.50 \leq d < 0.80$
- Large: $d \geq 0.80$

b. Eta-squared:

- Small: $\eta^2 < 0.01$
- Medium: $0.01 \leq \eta^2 < 0.06$
- Large: $\eta^2 \geq 0.06$

4.9.2 Well-being

The results indicate that there are not statistically significant in well-being scores between the age groups: $F_{BF}(2, 244) = 1.110$, $p_{BF} = .331$; $F_W(2, 149) = 1.145$, $p_W = .321$).

Table 4.16

ANOVA - Well-being

Homogeneity Correction	Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
None	Cohort	0.735	2.000	0.367	1.209	0.299	0.003
	Residuals	224.952	740.000	0.304			
Brown-Forsythe (BF)	Cohort	0.735	2.000	0.367	1.110	0.331	0.003
	Residuals	224.952	244.210	0.921			
Welch (W)	Cohort	0.735	2.000	0.367	1.145	0.321	0.003
	Residuals	224.952	149.495	1.505			

Table 4.17

Post Hoc Comparisons

			Mean Difference	SE	t	Cohen 's d	p_{tu} key	p_{bonfe} roni
					-			
1	-	2	-0.026	0.048	0.54	-0.048	0.844	1.000
					-			
		3	-0.126	0.081	1.55	-0.229	0.268	0.365
					-			
2	-	3	-0.100	0.075	1.33	-0.181	0.376	0.546

Note. P-value adjusted for comparing the 3 Generational Cohorts

Figure 4.17 shows the wellbeing and generational cohorts.

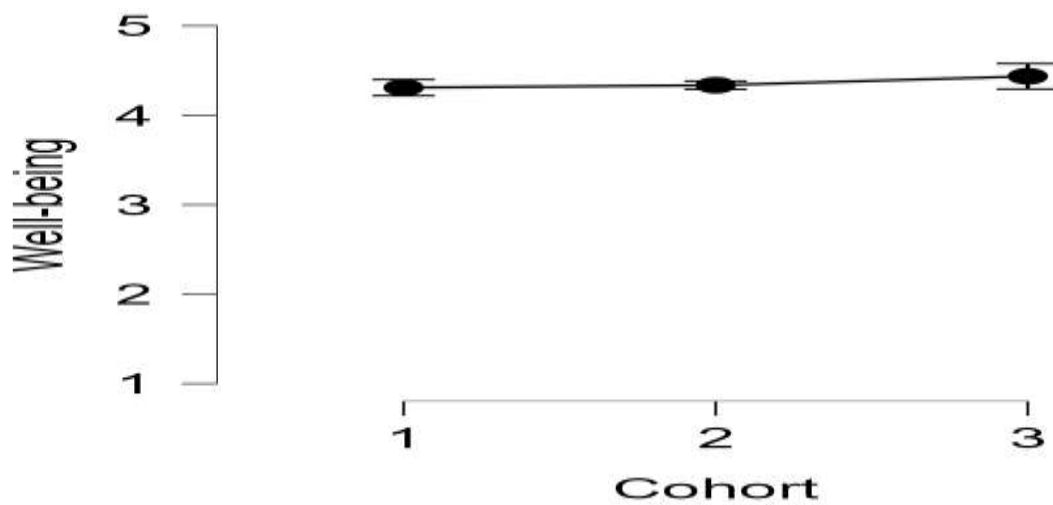


Figure 4.17: Wellbeing and Generational cohorts (Z, Y & Z)

4.8.3 Psychological Empowerment

The results indicate that there are not statistically significant in Psychological Empowerment scores between the age groups: $F(2, 740) = 1.684, p = .186$.

Table 5.18

ANOVA – Empowerment

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Cohort	2.543	2	1.272	1.68	0.18	0.00
Residuals	558.75	740	0.755	4	6	5

Table 5.19

Post Hoc Comparisons – job

			Mean Difference	SE	t	Cohen's d	p_{tuk}	$p_{bonferroni}$
1	-	2	0.137	0.075	1.834	0.158	0.159	0.201
	-	3	0.109	0.128	0.846	0.125	0.74	1.000
2	-	3	-0.029	0.118	-0.244	-0.033	0.968	1.000

Note. P-value adjusted for comparing the 3 Generational Cohorts

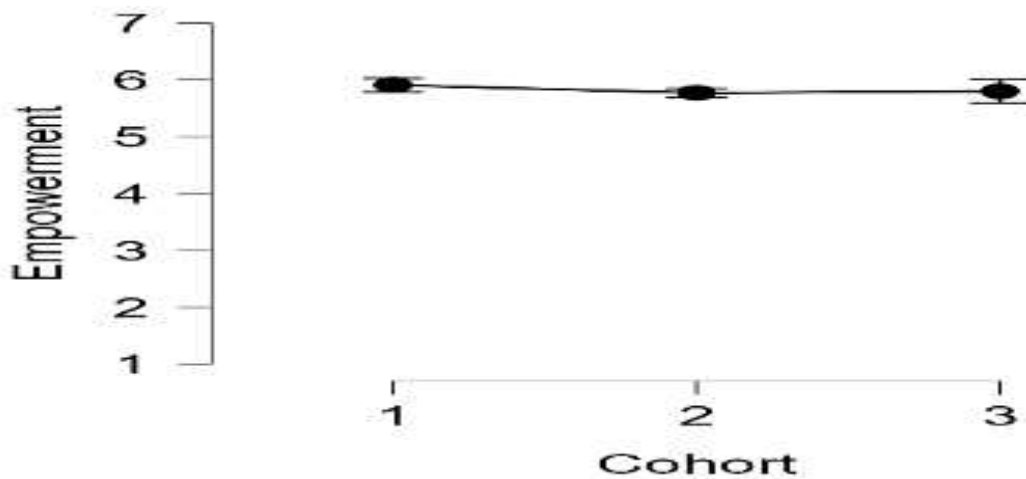


Figure: 5.18: Psychological Empowerment and Generational cohorts (Z, Y & Z)

4.8.4 Psychological Capital

The results indicate that a significant difference in Psychological capital exists between the age groups: $F(2, 740) = 7.890, p < .001$. According to the effect size guidelines, the size of the difference is medium ($\eta^2 = .021$). Tukey and Bonferroni post hoc tests identify that the mean score for (Generation **X**-born between 1965 - 1980) Cohort 1 ($M = 4.48, SD = 0.65$) was statistically significantly different to Cohort 2 ($M = 4.64, SD = 0.55$) with a small effect size ($d = -0.277$), and to Cohort 3 ($M = 4.78, SD = 0.58$) with a moderate effect size ($d = -0.515$). Cohorts 2 (Generation **Y**-born between 1981 - 1996) and Cohorts 3 (Generation **Z**, born between 1997 - 2012) were not significantly different on Psychological capital. This indicates that those born between the ages of 1981 - 2012 reported to have significantly less psychological capital than those older than them (Gen X - 1965 - 1980).

Table 4.20*ANOVA - Psychological Capital*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p	η²
Cohort	5.25	2	2.625	9	< .001	0.02
Residuals	246.226	74	0.333			

Table 4.21*Post Hoc Comparisons*

	Mean Difference	SE	t	Cohen's d	p_{Tukey}	p_{Bonferroni}
1 - 2	-0.160	0.050	3.208	-0.277	0.004**	0.004*
1 - 3	-0.297	0.085	3.487	-0.515	0.001**	0.002*
2 - 3	-0.138	0.078	1.758	-0.238	0.185	0.238

** p < .01

Note. P-value adjusted for comparing a family of 3

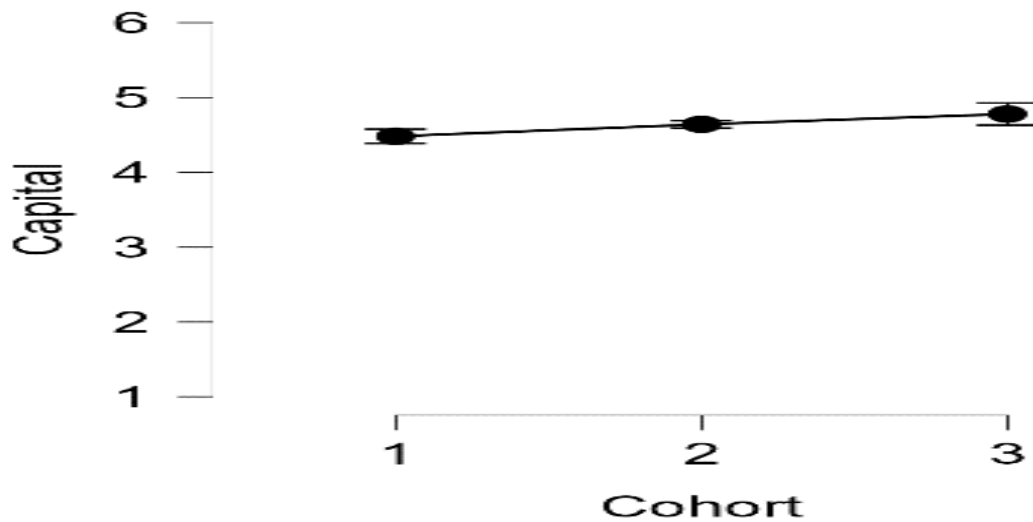


Figure 4.19: Psychological Capital and Generational cohorts (Z, Y & X)

4.8.5 Perceived organisational support

The results indicate that a significant difference in perceived organisational support exists between the age groups: $F(2, 740) = 4.289, p = .014$. However, the effect size indicates that the size of the difference is small ($\eta^2 = .011$). The post hoc tests bordered on significance ($p_{\text{tukey}} = .057, p_{\text{bonferroni}} = .066$) with a small effect size ($d = 0.198$) between Cohort 1 ($M = 4.02, SD = 1.27$) and Cohort 2 ($M = 3.76, SD = 1.35$). Interestingly, while not technically significant, there was a larger, yet still small, effect size ($d = -0.297$) between Cohorts 3 ($M = 4.16, SD = 1.30$) and 2 ($p_{\text{tukey}} = .074, p_{\text{bonferroni}} = .087$). The non-significant nature of these differences may warrant further investigation, but this may suggest that individuals in Generation Y feel slightly less supported than both the younger (Generation Z) and older generations (Generation X).

Table 4.22*ANOVA - Perceived organisational support*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Cohort	15.109	2	7.554	4.28	0.01	0.01
Residuals	1303.266	74	1.761	9	4	1

Table 4.23*Post Hoc Comparisons*

	Mean Difference	SE	t	Cohen's d	p_{tuk}	$p_{bonferroni}$
1 - 2	0.263	0.114	2.294	0.198	0.057	0.066
1 - 3	-0.131	0.114	-1.149	-0.099	0.251	1.000
2 - 3	-0.394	0.114	-3.456	-0.297	0.001	0.087

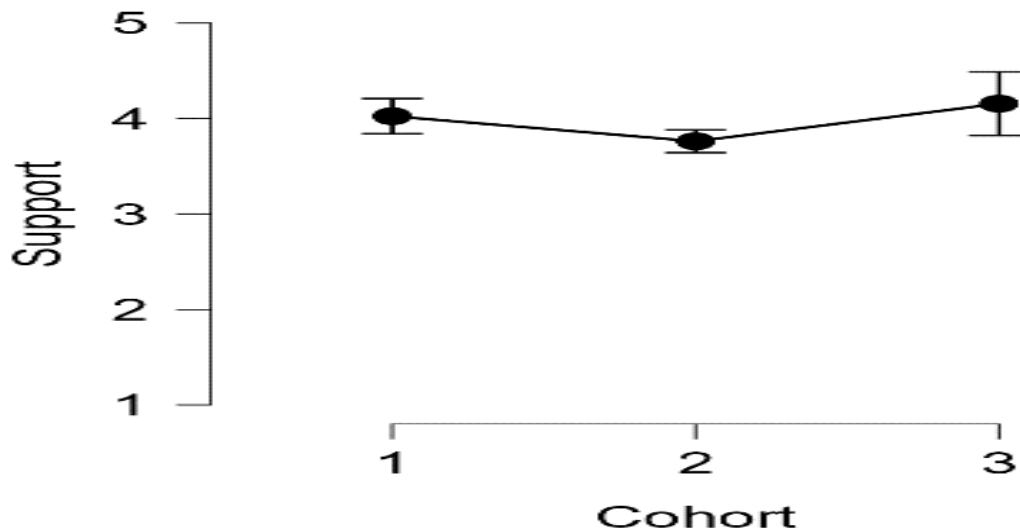


Figure 4.20: Perceived organisational support and Generational cohorts (Z, Y & Z)

4.9 SUMMARY OF THE OF HYPOTHESES TESTING

After having conducted all statistical analyses with regards to the proposed relationships between the constructs, it is necessary to draw conclusions regarding the hypotheses testing.

H1:

- e. *H₀: There is no significant relationship between Psy-Cap and Wellbeing.*
- f. *H₁: There is a significant relationship between Psy-Cap and Wellbeing.*

Findings - There is a direct significant relationship between Psychological Capital and Well-being ($\beta = .386$, $p < .001$) see Table 5.8. Addition, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), indicates that there is a direct significant positive relationship between Psychological Capital and Well-being ($\beta = .412$, $p < .001$) (see table 5.11). These results support H1 which states that there is a significant relationship between Psy-Cap and Wellbeing. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between Psy-Cap and Wellbeing.

H2:

- g. *H₀: There is no significant relationship between psychological empowerment and Wellbeing.*

h. H₁: There is a significant relationship between psychological empowerment and Wellbeing.

Findings - The table 5.9 indicates that there is a direct relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Well-being ($\beta = .307, p < .001$). Additionally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), table 5.12, indicates that there is a direct positive relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Well-being ($\beta = .488, p < .001$). H₂ is therefore supported. Thus, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis.

H₃:

i. H₀: There is no significant relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Wellbeing.

j. H₁: There is a significant relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Wellbeing.

Findings - The table 5.10, indicates that there is a direct relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being ($\beta = .121, p < .001$). Additionally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), table 5.13, indicates that there is a direct positive relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being ($\beta = .323, p < .001$) These findings thus supports H₃. Thus, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4:

k. H₀: There is no significant contribution of Psychological Capital, psychological empowerment, perceived organisational support in predicting of well-being.

l. H₁: There is significant contribution of Psychological Capital, psychological empowerment, perceived organisational support in predicting of well-being.

Findings - Table 5.6, shows the multiple regression analysis exhibited a significant overall model fit, $F(3, 739) = 105, p < .001$, with an R^2 value of .300, indicating that 30% of the variance in employee well-being was accounted for by the predictors. Psychological empowerment was the largest predictor of employee well-being ($\beta =$

.219, $p < .001$), followed by psychological capital ($\beta = .211$, $p < .001$) and perceived organisational support ($\beta = .058$, $p < .001$).

H5: Hypothesis 4:

H5a:

m. H₀: Generational differences (X, Y & Z) does not mediate the relationship between psychological capital and well-being.

n. H₁: Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) have a significant mediation effect on the relationship between Psychological Capital and well-being.

H5b:

o. H₀: Generational differences (X, Y & Z) does not mediate the relationship between psychological empowerment and well-being.

p. H₁: Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) have a significant mediation effect on the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and well-being.

H5c:

q. H₀: Generational differences (X, Y & Z) does not have mediate the relationship between perceived organisational support and well-being.

r. H₁: Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) have a significant mediation effect on the relationship between Organisational Support and well-being.

Findings from Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the three models evaluating the extent of Generational Cohort as a mediator between Psychological Capital and Well-being, Psychological Empowerment and Well-being, and Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being, suggest that the generational cohort, to which one belongs to, does not mediate these relationships.

Moreover, results in Table 4.8 shows that while controlling for Psychological Capital, no relationship exists between Generational cohort and Well-being ($\beta = -.011$, $p = .753$). Additionally, Table 4.9, controlling for Psychological empowerment, these seems to be a slight positive relationship between Generational Cohort and

Well-being ($\beta = .054, p = .004$). Moreover, Table 4.10, Additionally, controlling for Perceived Organisational Support, and a slight positive relationship between Generational Cohort and Well-being ($\beta = .045, p.012$). This result suggests that the generational cohorts do not mediate these relationships. H4 was not supported. Thus, the findings suggest that this research fails to reject the null hypothesis.

4. 10. Summary of the proposed Conceptual model

The above discussed results can be summarised in the following diagram model.

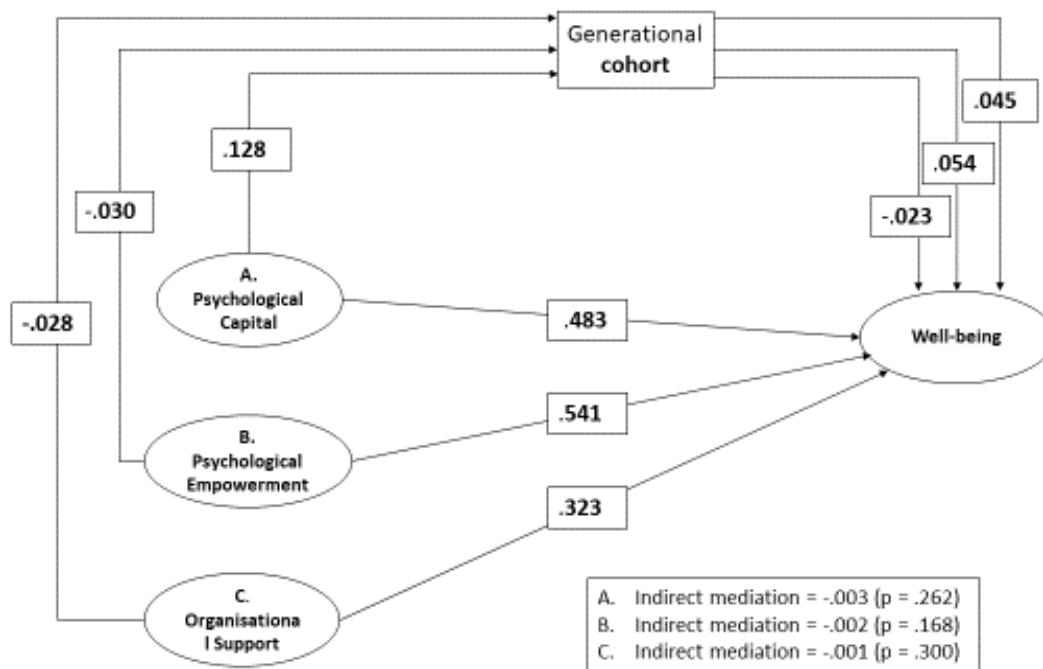


Figure 21: Summary of the proposed Conceptual model

4.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with the results of the present study. All measures were found to be valid and reliable. All constructs were moderately to strongly positively correlated with each other. Hierarchical regression, SEM, revealed that generational cohort to which one belongs does not mediate the relationships between the Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Perceived Organisational Support. The upcoming chapter will discuss these findings in conjunction with the relevant theories.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results of the study. It should be noted that the presentations were guided by the research questions and objectives of the study. Hypotheses were also tested. This chapter will provide a detailed discussion on the findings.

The conclusion of this investigation is introduced in this chapter, which brings together the threads that have been spun in the earlier chapters and shapes them into a coherent tapestry of insights and consequences. We begin by delving into the statistical tools and methodologies employed in our analysis. This initial discussion is crucial for understanding the underpinnings of our results and how they were derived. Here, we will explain the nuances of the statistical tools used, such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), and how these tools have been instrumental in interpreting the complex data sets at our disposal.

Following this, we transition into a detailed discussion of our results, systematically aligning them with the existing body of literature. This segment will illuminate how our findings corroborate, challenge, or extend the current understanding in the field. For instance, in section 6.3, we explored the relationship between Constructs: Navigating Complex Networks, juxtaposing our findings with seminal works in the field. This chapter seeks to delve into the complex web of Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support, and generational cohorts within the context of soldier well-being, building on the in-depth investigation and analysis undertaken in this research. We want to evaluate and analyse the intricate relationships between these notions and their consequences for comprehending the distinctive environment of military service.

As we set out on this journey of discussing the findings, the researcher will discuss the maze of statistical results, looking at them not just as discrete data points but also as hints to more fundamental patterns and principles. The importance of psychological capital, empowerment, and organisational support in influencing soldiers' well-being will be at the centre of our discussion. In order to shed light on the nature of military well-being and the elements that support it, the underlying

narrative of these constructs, their linkages, and interdependencies, will be dissected.

At the same time, a critical analysis of the function of generational cohorts as a mediating factor in these processes will be discussed. Although generational traits are widely acknowledged to have a substantial impact on attitudes and actions in the workplace (Kline, 2015), less research has been done on how they may differ in the very different environment of the military. This study sought to shed light on this area while refuting preconceived notions and posing new queries.

The researcher will also carefully examine the results that were not statistically significant. Contrary to conventional wisdom, non-significant results can provide just as much, if not more, information about the phenomenon being studied. They force researchers to re-evaluate presumptions, confront theoretical expectations, and generate fresh inquiries, advancing the study project.

The chapter will discuss the important findings with specific reference to concrete consequences for both theory and practise after drawing on this in-depth debate. As discussed above, this research has made significant contributions to the theoretical discussion of soldier well-being as well as the practical methods for improving it.

The analytical insights gained from Chapter 5 will serve as our compass as we navigate the final leg of this research, leading it to a more nuanced comprehension of the sources of soldier well-being and the strategies for fostering it. This chapter aims to establish a significant conclusion that resonates outside the parameters of this study, acting as a connecting thread between the empirical findings and their wider implications.

5.2 Demographic Distribution

5.2.1 Distribution by gender and ethnicity

The respondents' ethnic and gender makeup creates a diverse viewpoint that reflects the variety of the SANDF. The sample's 78.3% male composition is consistent with global defence forces trends. Due to cultural and societal traditions, males have historically held the majority of military positions. While there has been a progressive drive for gender equality in the armed forces, it is still a difficulty today

(Hinojosa, 2010). Compared to other foreign defence forces, the overwhelming African majority (93.5%) stands out dramatically on the ethnic front. This one ethnicity depiction highlights the significance of culturally sensitive psychological interventions and organisational support mechanisms. According to Pincus (2001), fostering cohesion and harmony in a defence setting depends on comprehending and recognising ethnic diversity. These findings are in line with the racial and gender breakdown per rank of the SANDF as of 30 April 2011. There were currently 56 663 males (73.4%) and 20,505 females (26.6%) in the SANDF (Department of Defence, 2011).

5.2.2 Generational Distribution

In the South African Army, generational distribution reveals a strong inclination towards Generation Y, which comprises 67.0% of the workforce. This younger demographic introduces a vitality and dynamism characteristic of their generation. However, as highlighted by Mannheim (1952) and Twenge (2014), generational shifts often result in variations in values, beliefs, and attitudes. For the Generation Y soldiers in the SA Army, there is a pronounced preference for flexibility, technological adeptness, and a desire for immediacy, as noted by Twenge (2014). Mannheim (1952) further underscores the impact of societal events in shaping generational perspectives, particularly relevant in the South African context with its unique socio-political history.

6.2.3 Educational Background

The way one views the world and approaches issues is significantly influenced by their level of education. The majority of respondents (71.9%) had a matriculation or an equivalent, indicating a basic level of education. This is in-line with the SANDF inherent job requirements, that all applicants should have matric or matric equivalent (Department of Defence, 2011). However, as Becker (1964) observed, educational investment and its relationship to other life outcomes, including wellbeing, can differ dramatically between contexts.

5.2.4 Marital Status

Additionally, the majority of respondents (54.0%) had never been married, underscoring a possible organisational emphasis area. This finding is significant for

several reasons, particularly in an organisational context like the South African Army. Firstly, unmarried soldiers may have different lifestyle needs and stressors compared to their married counterparts. For instance, they might require different types of support systems, such as more robust social networks within the army to compensate for the lack of a familial support system at home.

Furthermore, the absence of marital commitments might also mean that these soldiers are more flexible and mobile, potentially making them more available for deployments or relocations. However, it can also imply a different set of challenges such as increased feelings of isolation or a lack of stable personal relationships, which can impact their overall well-being and, by extension, their performance and engagement in the army. According to Ruggles' (1997) theory, psychological well-being and marital status have complex relationships that are exacerbated in defence circumstances.

5.2.5 Organisational Structure and racial clarification

According to the findings, the SA Army dominates the service landscape (81.4%), which correlates to its encompassing influence in the SANDF organisation. This is in line with the landward (SA Army) component of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is its single largest service with 36 952 personnel making up over half the total force strength of 72 322. The other two combat components of the South African National Defence Force together do not make up half the SA Army personnel component. The SA Air Force (SAAF), according to the latest Department of Defence (DoD) annual report, has a personnel strength of 9 527 and the maritime service numbers 6 389 people aboard and ashore. The SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) numbers 7 276 in its ranks with logistics (3 886) and Joint Operations divisions (2 006) ranking next on the list of people in service (Department of Defence, 2020). According to the Defence Review (2011), the SANDF (uniformed component) consisted of Africans 69,7%, coloureds 11,5%, Asians 1,2% and whites 17,7%.

5.3 Relationship between Constructs: Navigating Complex Networks

A powerful reminder of the complex nature of organisational studies is provided by the convoluted chain that links concepts like perceived organisational support, psychological capital, psychological empowerment, well-being, and generation

cohort. Barron and Kenny's mediation analysis approach and the use of structural equation modelling (SEM) provide important insights, but there are many intricacies that merit in-depth investigation.

5.3.1 Correlation Analysis: Gleaning Hidden Ties

Pallant (2011) defines correlation analysis as a method for determining the degree and trajectory of connections between variables. Given their diverse applications based on data properties, distinguishing between Pearson's and Spearman's correlation coefficients is critical. While Pearson's coefficient requires continuous and regularly distributed data, Spearman's coefficient is more adaptable and indifferent to such constraints. Cohen (1988) adds richness to this idea by defining correlation strengths.

However, the current analyses' Spearman's rho correlation results provide an engaging story. Given the underlying link between workplace support, empowerment, and well-being (Deci *et al.*, 2001; Luthans *et al.*, 2007), strong positive relationships between well-being and variables such as Perceived Organisational Support, Empowerment, and Psychological Capital are predicted. However, the lack of a robust association between well-being and the mediating variable, generation cohort, differs from what was expected. It appears to support Twenge's (2010) claim that generational transitions may not always result in major variations in employment outcomes.

The table, Spearman's (rho) Correlation Analysis Results, adds to the picture. Meaning, Competence, and Self-Determination, for example, exhibit substantial inter-correlations under Psychological Empowerment, showing the cohesive character of these dimensions (Spreitzer, 1995). Similarly, the components of Psychological Capital, particularly Hope and Resilience, show strong correlations with Empowerment, confirming previous research (Luthans *et al.*, 2006).

Nonetheless, the non-significant connection between the mediation variable (generation cohort) and both dependent and independent factors shows that the theoretical basis proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) may need to be revisited. Could it be that generation cohort behaves differently in this setting than previously thought?

Finally, the intricate dance of constructs revealed by this correlation analysis is reminiscent of a thrilling ballet of organisational dynamics, in which each actor contributes to the overall performance. The connections, or lack thereof, not only inform our comprehension but also drive us to rethink and revise our theoretical ideas on a regular basis.

5.3.2 Multiple Regression and Mediation Analysis: Probing the Depths

Multiple regression is a strong analytical method that goes beyond simple correlations and may forecast the value of a dependent variable based on the values of two or more independent variables. Despite being outdated, Barron and Kenny's technique is still useful for mediating studies (Hayes, 2013).

This paradigm states that three phases are necessary. First, the mediator must be strongly influenced by the independent variable. Second, in the absence of the mediator, the independent variable ought to have a considerable impact on the dependent variable. Finally, the mediator should have a substantial, individual influence on the dependent variable when the independent variable is controlled for (Barron & Kenny, 1986). The predicted mediation variable, generation cohort, does not correlate with either the dependent or independent variables, as shown by the data, which leads one to conclude that the presupposed mediation effect is not valid.

This departure from the anticipated mediation effect is a notable occurrence. The Barron and Kenny technique has its advantages, according to recent research by Zhao, *et al.*, (2010), although there are some circumstances under which indirect effects can appear even if not all of the requirements are met. This reasoning begs the question: Could there be unnoticed indirect effects that are concealed and lie beneath the surface?

5.3.3 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM): A Synoptic Lens

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is at the cutting edge of multivariate analysis, allowing researchers to examine a collection of correlations between variables at the same time. This method, which combines parts of component analysis and multiple regression, is essential for determining nuanced associations, particularly in a multifarious discipline such as organisational psychology (Byrne, 2016).

The SEM was used to validate the suggested model fit. Given that SEM may correct for measurement errors and contain latent components better than other statistical approaches (Bollen, 1989), determining whether the obtained connections between constructs actually represent the underlying theoretical assumptions is critical. If there are inconsistencies between the observed data and the theoretical model, the constructs or hypothesised relationships may need to be re-evaluated.

While there is a convergence of research confirming the key linkages between dimensions such as Perceived Organisational Support, Psychological Capital, and Well-being, the significance of generation cohort remains ambiguous. Scholars must thus delve further into these aspects, ushering in new theoretical frameworks or improving old hypotheses.

5.4 Mediation Analysis

In spite of its complexity, mediation analysis aims to clarify the mechanism by which an independent variable affects a dependent variable by way of a mediator. This process, often known as the "indirect effect," gives data interpretation a dimension that goes beyond simple cause-and-effect linkages.

According to Hayes (2009), mediation analysis, particularly in organisational research, is an effort to understand and deconstruct the mechanism that underlies observable correlations. It goes beyond just determining if an impact exists to investigating how it occurs. Preacher and Hayes (2008), in contrast, emphasise the weaknesses of conventional approaches, such as Baron and Kenny's, and claim that bootstrapping techniques are preferable for providing more reliable interpretations of indirect effects.

The methodology used by Barron and Kenny (1986) has traditionally been the cornerstone of mediation analysis. However, it is not without difficulties. According to MacKinnon, *et al.*, (2007), this traditional strategy could increase the likelihood of type II errors and miss any mediational effects that are already there. Their research showed that, although being sequential, the aforementioned stages are not particularly crucial. For instance, mediation need not necessarily create a direct link between the predictor (X) and the result (Y). The fundamental assumptions of the Barron and Kenny paradigm are called into question by this revolutionary

discovery. The researcher will discuss the results along with their empirical and theoretical implication.

5.5 What Is the Contribution of Psychological Capital in Predicting Employee Wellbeing of Soldiers?

Findings of this research table 4.8 (chapter 4) indicates that, there is a direct significant relationship between Psychological Capital and Well-being. Additionally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) table 4.4, table 4.7 (chapter 4) indicates that there is a direct significant positive relationship between Psychological Capital and Well-being.

These findings mean that, by developing employees' psychological capital through hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism training interventions predicts gains in attitudes, performance, adaptation and well-being. More specific to the military, a soldier (who is in the operational area), with high psychological capital will likely to cope well, adapt, adjust to the unpredictable environment of the military operations. Thus their performance is likely to be enhanced which subsequently leads to the mission success.

This research is yields similar results from a study that was carried out in Saudi Arabia by Sulphey, *et al.*, (2020) also had its results showing that Psychological capital enhances workforce wellbeing. Similarly, Al-Kahtani, *et al.*, (2020) further concluded that that Psychological Capital has a "yin and yang" relationship with workers wellbeing. Furthermore, multiple studies have found a positive association between Psychological Capital and the wellbeing of workers (Avey *et al.*, 2010; Bakker *et al.*, 2018; Noble *et al.*, 2018; Gavin & Hull., 2018; Gupta & Shaheen, 2018). Moreover, recent studies carried out by Grover, *et al.*, (2018), Imran, *et al.*, (2020), and Lups, *et al.*, (2019) also had their findings showing that Psychological Capital has a direct positive influence on the wellbeing of employees.

The research findings highlight a significant and positive relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and employee wellbeing, particularly in the context of military personnel. This relationship underscores the importance of developing PsyCap, encompassing dimensions such as hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism, to enhance various aspects of soldiers' attitudes, performance, adaptation, and overall wellbeing (Gurbuz & Yildirim , 2019). By fostering PsyCap

through targeted training interventions, soldiers are better equipped to navigate the unpredictable and demanding environment of military operations (Gurbuz & Yildirim, 2019). The findings suggest that soldiers with high PsyCap are more likely to exhibit adaptive coping strategies, resilience in the face of challenges, and a sense of confidence in their abilities to fulfil their duties effectively. Consequently, their performance is expected to be enhanced, ultimately contributing to mission success and overall organisational outcomes.

Moreover, the research aligns with similar studies conducted in various contexts, including the findings by Khattak et al. (2019) which also demonstrated the positive impact of PsyCap on workforce wellbeing. Additionally, studies by Al-Kahtani et al. (2020) and others have highlighted the nuanced relationship between PsyCap and worker wellbeing, further corroborating the significance of this construct in promoting positive organisational outcomes.

Empirical evidence from studies conducted by Azeem et al. (2020), Imran et al. (2020), and Lups et al. (2019) further supports the notion that PsyCap plays a pivotal role in enhancing employee wellbeing across different industries and organisational settings. These studies collectively underscore the universal applicability of PsyCap as a critical determinant of individuals' psychological health and overall organisational success. In the military context specifically, soldiers with elevated levels of PsyCap are likely to demonstrate a heightened sense of hope, optimism, efficacy, and resilience, which are essential attributes for effectively fulfilling their roles and responsibilities (Azeem et al, 2020). Such individuals are better positioned to perceive their impact on organisational activities and outcomes positively, contributing to a more cohesive and resilient military force.

Given the above discussion, in the military context, those soldiers who are high in PsyCap are likely to be hopeful in terms of accomplishment of their goals, are optimistic about achieving positive results, are more confident in making a difference on their job and possess the ability to get back to normal after facing a tragedy. Thus, these individuals are more likely to perceive themselves as having a great impact on their organisational activities and outcomes (James *et al.*, 2008).

5.6: What Is the Contribution of Psychological Empowerment in Predicting Employee Wellbeing of Soldiers?

Findings of the research indicates that there is a direct relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Well-being. Additionally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) table 4.4, table 4.5, table 4.7 (Chapter 4), indicates that there is a direct positive relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Well-being.

This findings, suggests that when employees are given the freedom to express themselves on a task, it builds their confidence which fosters positive mental health which subsequently increases their well-being. It is clear that this notion, places more emphasis on the leadership and organisational systems because it shapes employees' psychological empowerment perceptions. This means empowering leadership behaviours and practices that delegate authority, express confidence in employees, encourage autonomous decision-making, develop competencies, and explain organisational impact can foster psychological empowerment. Practically, it means, affording employee access to information, resources, support, and development opportunities, all these factors will enable conditions for internalized psychological empowerment to grow. As a results, psychologically empowered individuals are likely to display greater initiative, engagement, adaptive behaviours, well-being which ultimately benefit the group and organization at large.

These findings were supported by theory conducted by Spreitzer (1995), who pointed out that psychological empowerment is a key way that enhances employee's wellbeing through job security. This connection supports Spreitzer's (2022) claim that psychologically empowered people have greater significance and pleasant sensations in their work lives, which improves wellbeing. Additionally, a number of empirical research and publications have also shown that psychological empowerment is positively related to physical well-being of employers across all forms of organisations (Matthews, *et al.*, 2013; Tyagi & Pandey (2015); Luis, 2018; Robertson & Cooper, 2009). Furthermore, Laschinger et al., (2015); Cheung and Wu (2022) studies pointed out that Psychological Empowerment had a direct and positive effect on the wellbeing of employees. Furthermore, Multiple studies demonstrate empowerment is positively associated with intrinsic work motivation and flow experiences characterized by energized focus, enjoyment, and progress in work - all markers of eudemonic well-being (Raphael *et al.*, 2022).

Given the above discussion, given the hierarchical, autocratic nature of the military protocols and strict commands which often leaves less room for empowerment, these findings suggest that it is important for the military commanders to reconsider their training strategies and commands instructions by empowering soldiers more often, i.e. by training troops to exercise more autonomy and expressing themselves on tasks, being innovative in their respective roles, without compromising command and control, in order to increase soldiers well-being.

Thus, it appears that by psychologically empowering soldiers, for example, allowing them to exercise more command initiative, their positive feelings can be expected to increase which may enhance their level of wellbeing within the operational area. Given the non-significant nature of the mediation effect of generation difference, this means, although this feeling may differ from one soldier to another, there are likely to remain the similar across different generational cohorts. This technically implies that soldiers will have a free will to apply all their mental faculties, be innovative, bring new ideas even in the midst of strict instructions. In sum, soldiers will be motivated and thrive more when they are psychologically empowered.

The research findings emphasise a clear and positive correlation between Psychological Empowerment (PE) and employee wellbeing, as shown by the research results and backed by Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analyses. This connection highlights the significance of empowering leadership behaviours and organisational systems in promoting employees' psychological empowerment perceptions, ultimately benefiting their overall wellbeing.

Granting soldiers, the freedom to express themselves on tasks and make autonomous decisions can boost their confidence and sense of control, resulting in positive mental health outcomes and improved wellbeing (Nkewu, 2014). Highlighting the crucial importance of leadership in shaping organisational cultures that encourage psychological empowerment through delegating authority, expressing confidence in employees, and offering resources and support for development opportunities (Ali et al, 2021). They suggested that psychological empowerment plays a crucial role in enhancing employee wellbeing, especially in terms of job security. Research from multiple studies, such as Tyagi & Pandey (2015), Luis (2018), and Robertson & Cooper (2009), supports the strong link

between psychological empowerment and employee wellbeing in various organisational settings.

In addition, research conducted by Gurbuz & Yildirim, (2019) highlights the significant and beneficial impact of psychological empowerment on employee wellbeing. Moreover, a study conducted by Raphael et al. (2022) shows that empowerment is linked to intrinsic work motivation and flow experiences, which are signs of eudemonic wellbeing. In a military setting, which is known for its hierarchical and autocratic protocols, the research indicates the need to revise training methods and command directives to include more empowerment techniques. By enabling soldiers to have autonomy, express themselves on tasks, and innovate within their roles, military commanders can potentially improve soldiers' wellbeing in operational areas without sacrificing command and control (Khattak et al., 2019).

The lack of a significant mediation effect of generational differences indicates that the positive influence of psychological empowerment on soldiers' wellbeing is consistent across various generational cohorts (Khattak et al., 2019). Soldiers from different generations can benefit from psychological empowerment, enabling them to utilise their mental abilities, be innovative, and excel in their roles.

5.7 What Is the Contribution of Organisational Support in Predicting Employee Wellbeing of Soldiers?

Findings of the research indicates that there is a direct relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being ($\beta = .121$, $p < .001$). Additionally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) table 4.4, table 4.5, table 4.7 (Chapter 4), indicates that there is a direct positive relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being ($\beta = .323$, $p < .001$). The results proved that the benefit of Organisational Support to the well-being of the employees can never be denied. High POS means employees view the organization as committed to them, willing to reward increased effort, and considerate of their needs and interests (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2022).

This means that, employees who perceive that their organization genuinely cares about their well-being, provides socioemotional resources, and rewards extra effort may be likely to experience greater belongingness, high esteem, happiness, and performance motivation which subsequently leads increased well-being.

According to Neves and Eisenberger (2015), Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, (2011) as well as Baran *et al.*, (2022) found that an Organisational Support contributes positively to employees in terms of wellbeing both in and outside work. According to literature, Perceived Organisational Support can be regarded as a job resource and these job resources are related to overall well-being by buffering the negative effects of job demands (Chen *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, Organisational support is also regarded as a key factor that helps to enhance wellbeing of employees through providing training and development, finance and emotional help (Gould, 2019). Moreover, these findings are consistent with research conducted by Bennert (2016) who purports that training programs which are a form of organisational support are key in ensuring job security in employees which is a form of their wellbeing, and it enhances performance. Carrington (2016) found similar findings.

Thus military commanders need to support soldiers by their meeting socioemotional needs and signaling their value in order to increase soldiers' well-being and attitudes. Thus the military units should assess current POS using validated scales and implement systemic practices including growth opportunities, care for employees, supervisor support training, and work-life policies to enhance POS and reap well-being rewards.

Moreover, the military needs to support and help soldiers in order to achieve work life fit so to enhance their well-being. To help soldiers achieve better work-life fit, the military can enhance current training opportunities to empower commanders and section heads to have the knowledge and ability to engage in work-family management practices. Work-family management practices strive to redesign work to support soldiers with any conflicting work-life demands to benefit both organisations and employees. This means redefining the policies and strategies which supports soldiers socio-emotional and work needs within the deployment/operational area.

Thus, the researcher concludes that soldiers who perceive to have high organisational support may create a sense of indebtedness in their minds which motivate them to enhance their wellbeing within the workplace and deployment mission area. Thus, their performance is likely to increase thus leading to mission success in operation area.

The study highlights a clear and beneficial link between Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and employee wellbeing, as evidenced by the research results and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analyses. This connection emphasises the importance of organisational support in nurturing employees' feelings of belonging, self-worth, joy, and drive, ultimately leading to improved well-being. Workers who feel that their company values their well-being, offers support, and acknowledges their hard work tend to have better overall well-being (Nkewu, 2015). This is in line with existing research, which highlights the importance of POS in mitigating the adverse impact of job demands on one's overall wellbeing. Research conducted by Azeem et al., (2020) highlights the beneficial effects of organisational support on employee wellbeing, whether at work or in personal life. Organisational support plays a crucial role in offering training, development opportunities, financial assistance, and emotional support, all of which enhance employees' overall sense of wellbeing. In addition, studies conducted by Brady et al., (2021) emphasise the importance of organisational support, especially through training initiatives, in improving job security and performance, which in turn benefits employee wellbeing.

In a military setting, it is crucial for military commanders to prioritise meeting soldiers' socioemotional needs and signalling their value within the organisation to enhance soldier wellbeing and attitudes (Brooks & Greenberg, 2018). Evaluating and improving POS through systematic practices such as offering growth opportunities, employee care, supervisor support training, and implementing work-life policies can greatly benefit soldiers' wellbeing in deployment and operational areas. Furthermore, assisting soldiers in attaining a more balanced work-life schedule can be accomplished by improving training opportunities that enable commanders and section heads to implement work-family management strategies. These strategies focus on restructuring work to support soldiers with competing work-life responsibilities, ultimately benefiting both the organisation and its employees (Brady et al., 2021).

5.8 What is Significant Contribution of Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, Perceived Organisational Support in Predicting Well-Being?

Findings from table 4.15 chapter 4 indicates that the multiple regression analysis exhibited a significant overall model fit, $F(3, 739) = 105, p < .001$, with an R^2 value of .300, indicating that 30% of the variance in employee well-being was accounted for by the predictors. Psychological empowerment was the largest predictor of employee well-being ($\beta = .219, p < .001$), followed by psychological capital ($\beta = .211, p < .001$) and perceived organisational support ($\beta = .058, p < .001$).

From the literature above, it can be deduced that POS, Psychological Empowerment, PsyCap are positively related to improved employee wellbeing. These findings imply that Perceived Organisational Support provides an enabling condition for employees to internalize Psychological Empowerment and capitalize on PsyCap resources predicting work motivation, engagement, performance, satisfaction as well as well-being. This means employees who felt valued by the organization reported higher self-efficacy, resilience, hope, empowerment, competence, and work meaning and this subsequently likely to improves their well-being.

Research shows that people who feel empowered tend to have a strong sense of self-efficacy and feel that they are capable of doing their jobs well and making things happen (Johns & Saks, 2011). Roemer and Harris (2018) argue that Organisational Support (POS), PsyCap and wellbeing are positively correlated to one another. From the literature above, it can be deduced that POS and PsyCap are positively related to improved employee wellbeing. More recently, a cross-sectional survey study of retail employees showed perceived organisational support positively predicted psychological empowerment and PsyCap (Li *et al.*, 2023). Similarly, a longitudinal survey study with municipal employees confirmed perceived Organisational Support at time 1 positively predicted Psychological Empowerment and PsyCap at time 2 (Matthews *et al.*, 2022). In turn, both PsyCap and empowerment positively predicted organisational commitment and job performance (Matthews *et al.*, 2022). This supports temporal precedence from organisational support to psychological states to well-being.

In the military context, it means that soldiers who have been empowered, have high PsyCap and organisational support are likely to adapt well to the operational stress, cope and maintain healthy mental level when executing their unpredictable situations.

Additionally, it appears that by psychologically empowering soldiers, for example, by involving them in decision making, their self-efficacy (Psych-Cap) and positive feeling of organisational support can be expected to increase, which may enhance their level of wellbeing in the military

Moreover, soldiers who are high in PsyCap are hopeful in term of accomplishment of their goals, are optimistic about achieving positive results, are more confident in making a difference on their job and possess the ability to bounce back to normal after facing a tragedy during peace and wartime. Thus, these individuals may perceive themselves as having a great impact on their organisational activities and outcomes.

This means, for the military to improve soldier's readiness, resilience which ultimately lead to mission success, it needs to adapt their policies and programs in line with factors that support soldiers wellbeing. Put practically, the military need to optimize the systems which enhances Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, Perceived Organisational, to enhance well-being of their troops, especially within the operation area.

Various empirical studies have shown the significant contributions of Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Psychological Empowerment, and Perceived Organisational Support (POS) in predicting employee wellbeing, which support the research findings. These structures are essential for improving employee well-being by creating favourable conditions for employees to excel in their work settings.

Recent research indicates that POS, PsyCap, and psychological empowerment have a positive correlation with enhanced employee wellbeing. For instance, in a study by Li et al. (2023), a cross-sectional survey was conducted among retail employees. The results showed that perceived organisational support had a positive impact on psychological empowerment and PsyCap. In a recent study by Matthews et al. (2022), a longitudinal survey was conducted with municipal employees. The results confirmed that perceived organisational support had a positive impact on psychological empowerment and PsyCap, which in turn positively influenced organisational commitment and job performance.

In addition, Johns and Saks (2011) suggest that people who feel empowered typically exhibit high self-efficacy and competence in their roles, resulting in positive results like enhanced motivation, involvement, and productivity. Roemer and Harris (2018) also

suggest that there is a positive correlation between POS, PsyCap, and wellbeing, highlighting the significance of organisational support in promoting positive psychological states and wellbeing.

Within a military setting, the research indicates that soldiers who feel empowered, have high PsyCap, and perceive organisational support are more capable of adapting to operational stress, dealing with unpredictable situations, and maintaining healthy mental states in both peace and wartime. By engaging soldiers in decision-making processes and boosting their sense of support from the organisation, their self-efficacy and positive feelings of support are likely to increase, ultimately improving their wellbeing within the military setting.

In addition, soldiers who possess high PsyCap exhibit traits like hope, optimism, confidence, and resilience. These qualities help them feel that they make a substantial difference in organisational activities and results. Highlighting the significance of optimising systems in the military to enhance PsyCap, psychological empowerment, and perceived organisational support for improving soldier readiness, resilience, and ultimately mission success.

5.9 Generational Differences as a Mediator Between Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, Perceived Organisational

5.9.1 How do the Generational Differences (X, Y & Z) mediate the relationship between Psychological Capital and well-being?

Findings from table 4.15 chapter 4, ANOVA results indicate that a significant difference in Psychological capital exists between the Generational cohorts/groups. According to the effect size guidelines, the size of the difference is medium. Tukey and Bonferroni post hoc tests (table 4.19 chapter 4) identify that the mean score for Generation **X** (born between 1965-1980) was statistically significantly different to Generation **Y** with a small effect size, to Generation **Z** with a moderate effect size. Moreover, Generation **Y** (born between 1981-1996) and Generation **Z** (born between 1997-2012) were not significantly different on psychological capital.

However, a while there is a significant correlation between Psychological Capital and generational cohorts, this predicted mediational role appears to fade when examining the relationship between generational cohorts and well-being. This latter

link provides an insignificant coefficient, implying that generational cohorts may not be the mediators originally thought to be. Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) proposed an innovative viewpoint in which generational differences were theorised to be crucial in shaping workplace dynamics. However, in this setting, their mediation influence is fading. This supports Costanza *et al.*, (2012) warning against overgeneralizing generational characteristics.

This indicates that soldiers born between the ages of 1981-2012 (Generation **Y**) reported to have significantly less psychological capital than those older than them (Gen X - 1965-1980). They could be due several factors such as exposure and long service of generation X soldiers might contribute their level of psychological capital. This means, they may have developed 'thick skin', and high self-efficacy throughout their military career, given constant exposure to military courses, and several extensive combat exercises, which enables them to develop strategies to cope and bounce back when faced with adversity or stressful situation, especially in the operation area when compared with the young generation Y.

There is limited research that explores the differences in PsyCap between generational cohorts. The findings from this research are consistent with research conducted by Staples (2014) who explored the generational differences in PsyCap across multiple industries with a sample of 347 respondents. The findings indicated that Baby Boomers' PsyCap scores were higher than their younger generations and ANOVA results suggested statistically significant difference among the generations Staples (2014). Sweet and Swayze (2017) studies for nurses in the hospital found that, Nurses overall psychological capital scores and self-efficacy significantly varied by generation, with Baby Boomers having the highest overall level of psychological capital, followed by Generation X, and Millennials. Self-efficacy was greater for nurses working on day shift, as compared to night shift. These are the only research conducted on PsyCap scores by generation as per google scholar search.

Considering the above discussion, the SANDF may consider investing more resources on health and wellbeing programmes, specifically those that increase Psychological capital which is tailored made between Gen Y and Gen X. These are just a few of the examples to demonstrate that wellbeing as a theory does not need

a straight-jacket approach, but different interventions so as to respond appropriately to the generational' demands and uniqueness in order to promote soldiers wellbeing.

5.9.2. How do the Generational differences (X, Y, Z) mediate the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and well-being?

The results indicate that a significant difference in Perceived Organisational Support exists between the age groups. However, the effect size indicates that the size of the difference is small as indicated in table 4.21 chapter 4. The Perceived Organisational Support hoc tests bordered on significance with a small effect size between Generation **X** and Generation **Y**. Interestingly, while not technically significant, there was a larger, yet still small, effect size between Generation **Z** and Generation **Y**.

This means that the workers who obtain valued assets (e.g., rise in pay, opportunities for developmental training) build up Perceived Organisational Support and hence feel obliged to struggle hard to pay back their employing organization. They may likely to help their organization to develop rapidly and to achieve its objectives due to the custom of reciprocity. This notion suggests that, generational groupings does have a small difference, particularly, between Generation **X** and Generation **Y**. This means the Organisational support approaches and resources adopted should be tailor-made to suit each respective generation. Furthermore, the non-significant nature of these differences may warrant further investigation, but this may suggest that individuals in Generation **Y** feel slightly less supported than both the younger (Generation **Z**) and older generations (Generation **X**).

This research differs from studies conducted by Becton *et al.*, (2022) who found that Baby Boomers' preference for hierarchy, structure, and esteem for authority figures could strengthen the mediated effects of Perceived Organisational Support or empowering leadership on their attitudes compared to Gen X employees who value independence and self-reliance. Meanwhile another research showed, Millennials (Gen Z)' have higher motivation for rapid development and growth opportunities may result in Organisational Support practices focused on advancement contributing more strongly to their well-being relative to Gen Y's

craving for meaningful roles, when considering the mediating role of generational differences (Rudolph *et al.*, 2022).

This results may suggest that Generation Y soldiers, given their military career stage (career establishment stage) they may feel that the military does not care, and their performance is not appreciated and acknowledged by their organisation. This generation Y appears to have undergone courses within their respective corps services; however, they may feel that, despite being course qualified, highly disciplined, their efforts are not reciprocated in form of i.e., promotion, incentives or get rewarded by the organisation. Majority may have started to establish families, such as young kids, newly committed relationships or marriages and thus they may not accept positions outside their family home or may not be willing to deploy externally for extended periods of time. They may feel like the military does not consider them when making decision that impact their career. Hence they (Gen Y) feel less supported than other generation X.

Generation X, on their hand, given their long-term service may see the military career on the other lens such as being supportive. This generation are in career maintenance stage and working towards career decline stage and currently preparing for exit and thus looking forward to their benefits that comes with retirement packages such as continued medical aid at no extra fee. Some may be offered and accepted good severance packages around the ages of 55 years thus making them to perceive the military as supportive.

The mediation of generational differences (X, Y, Z) in the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and wellbeing presents intriguing insights into how individuals from different generations perceive and respond to organisational support. The findings indicate that there are significant differences in perceived organisational support between the age groups, albeit with small effect sizes. This suggests that while there are differences, they may not be substantial enough to warrant major alterations in organisational support approaches for each generation. However, understanding these nuances is crucial in tailoring support mechanisms to better meet the needs of employees across different generational cohorts.

Ali et al. (2022) found that preference for hierarchy and structure, as well as their esteem for authority figures, could strengthen the mediated effects of POS or empowering leadership on their attitudes compared to Gen X employees who value independence and self-reliance. Similarly, research has shown that Millennials (Gen Z), with their higher motivation for rapid development and growth opportunities, may respond more positively to organisational support practices focused on advancement relative to Gen Y's craving for meaningful roles (Hambrick et al., 2018). These findings highlight the importance of considering generational differences in shaping perceptions of organisational support and its impact on wellbeing.

In the military context, Generation Y soldiers may perceive less support from the organization compared to other generations. This could be attributed to factors such as feeling unappreciated despite their efforts, limited opportunities for advancement or promotion, and challenges related to work-life balance, particularly as many may be starting families. On the other hand, Generation X soldiers, with their longer service tenure, may perceive the military as more supportive, especially as they approach the later stages of their careers and prepare for retirement.

5.9.3 How do the Generational differences (X, Y, Z) mediate the relationship between psychological empowerment and well-being?

ANOVA results in table 4.17, chapter 4 indicates that there are not statistically significant in Psychological Empowerment and, Well-being, scores between the age groups. This means no generational difference that exist between the variables other factors can investigated to shed some light in this regards. These findings raise, the possibility of additional factors or constructions, socio-cultural or economic, that differ between generations and may have an impact on wellbeing (Inglehart, 1997). Additionally, scholars caution applying generational insights too narrowly without consideration of wider socio-historical and individual factors shaping member perspectives and behaviours (Joshi *et al.*, 2022). Empirical evidence directly examining generation as a mediator of workplace processes remains scarce.

The concept of psychological empowerment has been extensively studied during the last two decades in different contexts, such as hotel staff (Amenumey & Lockwood, 2008), public welfare caseworkers (Petter *et al.*, 2002), nurses (Koberg *et al.*, 1999; Knol & Van Linge, 2009), social workers (Itzhaky & York, 2000) and teachers (Marks & Louis, 1999). There is, however, limited research that explores the differences in Psychological Empowerment between generational cohorts. One of the elements of PERMA theory is meaning. According to Seligman, *et al.*, (2005), meaning involves serving something greater than themselves or it can be found in belonging; it can be spiritual, religious or a cause that can help someone other than oneself. There is a positive link between meaning and wellbeing. Individuals with a sense of meaning reported to be less depressive and anxious (Steger, *et al.*, 2006). On the other hand, Spreitzer and Doneson (2008) describe empowerment as a multidimensional construct comprising of: **Meaning**: “value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to one’s own ideal or standards”.

Given the above perspectives, it can be established that, soldiers who are empowered will be likely to perceive themselves to be more competent and think that they have more influence on their job and organisations. Thus, military organisations are therefore encouraged to empower their employees so that they cultivate their sense of meaning at work and excel in their duties in order to improve their well-being. Nonetheless this research did not find any significant difference in the way the different generational grouping perceive empowerment and how it increases their well-being. This continuity shows that, even while generational differences may exist in some facets of organisational life, the profound, fulfilling experience of empowerment and its impact on wellbeing transcend generational divisions. This highlights the need of organisations investing in building psychological empowerment to improve employee well-being, regardless of their workforce's makeup by generation.

5.10. The Proposed Conceptual Model: The Mediation Effect of Generational Differences (X, Y & Z)

Our investigation into the mediating role of Generational Cohorts (X, Y & Z) on the relationships between Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Perceived Organisational Support with Well-being yields intriguing insights. The

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis, examining the extent to which Generational Cohort mediates these relationships, indicates a surprising outcome: generational cohort/grouping does not significantly mediate these relationships as hypothesized. This finding challenges some prevailing assumptions about generational influences in workplace dynamics.

Generational differences, while recognized as influencing factors in the workplace, as Lyons and Kuron (2014) suggest, do not significantly alter the dynamics between Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, or Perceived Organisational Support and Well-being in our study. This raises questions about the nature and extent of generational impact in these areas. The data presented chapter four, do not support the notion that generational cohort acts as a significant mediator. Instead, these relationships are more directly influenced by other factors.

This finding prompts a critical re-evaluation of the role of generational differences. While generational characteristics undoubtedly contribute to diverse beliefs, work ethics, and expectations, their influence may be more nuanced and less direct than previously thought. This insight aligns with the multifaceted nature of Psychological Capital as described by Luthans, *et al.*, (2007), suggesting that factors other than generational disparities might play a more substantial role in mediating the relationships with well-being.

Moreover, the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and well-being, which remains unaffected by generational influences, calls for further exploration into other potential mediators. Could organisational culture or industry-specific factors hold more sway in this regard. Franklin, (2019) exploration of the intrinsic motivation aspect of Psychological Empowerment hints at influences beyond generational lines, pointing towards the organisational environment or individual-level attributes as more significant mediators.

In summary, while generational differences are a compelling aspect of workplace dynamics, their role as mediators in the relationships between Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, Perceived Organisational Support, and Well-being appears limited. This leads us to consider other potential mediating factors, underscoring the need for further research in this area.

5.11 Synthesizing the Patterns of Relationships Within Military Context: The Interplay of Constructs in Soldiers' Well-Being.

When exploring into the complex area of military well-being, it becomes necessary to go further into the matrix of relationships revealed by the questions addressed. The link between Psychological Capital and well-being is indisputably strong, mirroring the claims of Luthans, *et al.*, (2007), noted that Psychological Capital plays a critical role in cultivating well-being, particularly in demanding occupations such as the military. However, other researchers, such as Sweetman and Luthans (2010), argue that this link is not general. Their discourse implies that the setting, particularly in occupations with significant emotional and physical demands, may have extra layers that require more investigation. The obvious association shown in our study thus underlines the necessity for further detailed research to untangle this intricate tapestry.

The relationship between Psychological Empowerment and well-being introduces an additional layer of complexity to our analysis. Our findings resonate with Franklin, (2019) assertion that empowerment extends beyond enhancing work performance; it also positively influences an individual's sense of well-being. This suggests that when soldiers feel empowered, they are likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation, and personal fulfilment, contributing to their overall well-being.

However, the connection is not without its nuances, particularly in hierarchically structured organisations like the military. Roberts (2018) caution that empowerment does not automatically equate to enhanced well-being in such settings. This discrepancy can be attributed to several factors inherent in military organisations. Firstly, the hierarchical nature of the military may limit the extent to which empowerment can be experienced by individual soldiers. While they may be given more autonomy or decision-making power, the rigid command structure might still restrict their ability to exercise it fully, potentially leading to frustration or a sense of futility.

The connection between Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Well-being in the military context is notably significant. This finding aligns with Rhoades and Eisenberger's (2002) seminal work, which underscores the critical role of POS in

positively influencing employee well-being. Rhoades and Eisenberger emphasize that POS enhances an employee's psychological state, leading to improved job satisfaction, reduced stress, and overall better mental health (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

In the military setting, the implications of POS are particularly profound. Military personnel often face high-stress and high-risk environments, making organisational support crucial not only for job satisfaction but also for mental health and resilience (Griffith, 2002). A strong sense of support from the organization can result in increased morale, a feeling of belonging, and a significant psychological buffer against the stresses of military life (Adler & Castro, 2000).

The investigation on Generational Cohorts as mediators reveals a captivating discussions. While popular literature shows differing age preferences and views, such as Howe and Strauss (1997), our data reveal an intriguing paradox. Contrary to popular belief, generational cohorts may not be important mediators in these interactions. This supports Costanza *et al.*, (2012) warning against overgeneralizing generational characteristics. This means the military should take precaution and not over-emphasise the importance of generational difference particularly when adopting, implementing strategies and programs which are aimed at increasing psychological capital, empowering soldiers, organisational support in order to improve well-being of soldiers. This means implementing a standard approach across all generations when improving soldier's psychological capital, perceived organisational support, psychological empowerment in order to enhance their well-being.

5.12 Strategies to foster wellbeing

To promote wellbeing in the military, especially in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), a holistic approach is necessary, taking into account personal resources like elements of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and organisational support. It is crucial to cater to the requirements of various generational groups within the SANDF to establish a nurturing environment that promotes well-being.

Training and development programmes must be implemented. These must be tailored to meet the unique needs and preferences of various generational cohorts (Li et al., 2023). As an illustration, Generation Y (Millennials) could take advantage of

opportunities for quick skill development and career growth, while Generation X might appreciate programmes that improve their leadership abilities as they move closer to retirement. Through customised training programmes, the SANDF can empower soldiers to improve their PsyCap and adjust to evolving operational requirements (Li et al., 2023).

The SANDF must establish mentorship and coaching programmes to facilitate knowledge transfer and skill development across different age groups. Matching up junior soldiers with seasoned mentors from previous generations can offer valuable advice and assistance, while also building a strong sense of unity and teamwork within the group (Matthews et al., 2022). These initiatives may help enhance PsyCap by boosting self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism among soldiers (Matthews et al., 2022).

They must also consider the various needs and preferences of different generational cohorts when it comes to work-life balance. Introduction of flexible work arrangements, like telecommuting options or flexible schedules, to support soldiers with family responsibilities or other personal commitments is another strategy (Rudolph et al., 2022). Offering flexible work arrangements can boost perceived organisational support and improve overall wellbeing by decreasing stress and encouraging work-life balance (Rudolph et al., 2022).

They must also implement recognition and rewards programmes to acknowledge soldiers' contributions and achievements across various generational cohorts. Acknowledging the achievements of individuals and teams can boost morale, motivation, and job satisfaction, while also strengthening a sense of belonging and appreciation in the organisation (Becton et al., 2022). Aligning recognition initiatives with the preferences and values of different generations can enhance perceived organisational support and promote a positive organisational culture (Becton et al., 2022).

The SANDF must also provide wellness and resilience training programmes to help soldiers develop skills and strategies to effectively manage stress, adversity, and uncertainty. They can do that by integrating positive psychology and mindfulness-based practices into training programmes to enhance psychological wellbeing and resilience in soldiers (Roemer & Harris, 2018). Investing in the personal resources and

wellbeing of soldiers can improve readiness, performance, and mission success according to Roemer & Harris (2018).

5.13 Contribution of The Study and Reflections

Of late, organisations are faced with not only cultural differences, but also generational differences as well. Twenge et al., (2010), avers that technological improvements, different values, behaviours and attitudes, diverse work conditions and preferences make necessary for the organisations to consider the generational differences. Generational differences come with different characteristics.

The anticipated value of the study lies in gaining a better understanding of the factors that contribute to employee well-being and the mediating effect of generational difference. It will be of great benefit to all concerned to investigate how organisational support, psychological empowerment and psychological capital can operate in order to promote the well-being of employees. This is important because organisations like the military face huge costs due to employee absenteeism, lack of motivation, and low work performance resulting from low levels of employee well-being or even ill-being (Olivares-Faúndez, et al., 2014). The present study aimed at investigating how the generational difference accounts for the relationship between PsyCap, POS, psychological empowerment and well-being.

First, it cannot be overstated how important Psychological Capital is in determining how well-off troops are. Our research indicates that it serves as a cornerstone, tying collective abilities to organisational realities. It acts as a reminder of the troops' underlying resilience and optimism, which are influenced by both their training and innate character attributes.

However, the importance of psychological empowerment and organisational support cannot be understated. The first highlights the soldier's feeling of agency and self-efficacy, while the second emphasises the crucial part played by the military organisation in fostering an atmosphere that is supportive of good mental health. The complete wellbeing of persons in service is really supported by the delicate balance of these constructions working in unison with one another.

The complexity of this environment is further amplified by the investigation of generational cohorts as mediators. Our findings raise deeper queries regarding the

cultural and contextual foundations that characterise each generation, even though they may suggest a suppressed role in the interactions under study. The military is fundamentally a microcosm of society, and generational dynamics within its ranks fluctuate in line with wider socioeconomic changes. The researcher is aware of the fact that; absences of evidence are not always evidence of absence when we drew conclusions from the non-significant data. These results demand that we reconsider our assumptions, go beyond the apparent, and accept the depth and subtlety of the military mind.

From a practical standpoint, this analysis has certain ramifications for military command, training procedures, and support systems. Knowing what factors influence wellbeing might help create programs that will help troops not just survive but also flourish. That is, knowledge about this mechanism will allow not only the military but organisations to offer support structures that target the PsyCap of their employees in order to promote their well-being. If job resources like organisational support and psychological empowerment can fuel the personal resources of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, employees will not only be accumulating resources that protect them from the negative effects of a demanding military environment and that assist them in dealing with challenges: the ensuing developed and positive mind-set could also contribute to a greater sense of well-being.

For this reason, the present study is regarded as offering a potentially valuable contribution to the existing body of research and revealed practical implications and applications for organisations. Moreover, on theoretical level, it is anticipated that the proposed model can be used to measure the contribution of PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support on the Wellbeing of the soldiers. Thus, the model can not only be applied within the military units but can be applied to different organisation across different age groups. This study can in future be employed as a framework of considering the psychological side of the soldiers and other forces in regard to their well-being. Taking into cognisance PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support on the well-being of the soldier. Furthermore, the responsible authorities can use this research as a measuring tool to scrutiny the development of their members and their attitudes towards work.

As we reflect on our experience with this study, it becomes clear that soldier well-being is a mosaic of several components, each of which interacts with the others to create a complicated and meaningful image. While our analysis provides a glimpse, the bigger picture of military well-being is always changing, calling for more research and empathic comprehension. We leave this chapter and the study with a greater understanding of the struggles and victories of military life as well as a renewed resolve to helping those who devote their lives to keeping us safe.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Previous chapter discussed the findings of the study. The present chapter will highlight the conclusion, limitations, implications of the study and provide recommendations. The systematisation of this chapter is that the author started with the research main goals and objectives, bringing together the key findings and their theoretical and practical consequences.

As we near the end of our journey, this chapter attempts to distil the core of our extensive investigation into military well-being. The earlier chapters, which were extensively detailed and hotly discussed, laid the groundwork for this culminating contemplation. We offer practical suggestions targeted for military organisations, policymakers, and future training procedures based on empirical facts and earlier debates. As part of our commitment to intellectual integrity, we will also highlight the study's shortcomings, outlining potential paths for further research. As the concluding stop on this academic trip, this chapter serves as both a summary and an invitation, summarising our findings and insights while also opening the door for additional research and discussion in the large field of military well-being.

6.2 Conclusion drawn from the study

At the beginning our research, we set out to uncover the complex connections between soldiers' wellbeing and its determinants, including psychological capital, psychological empowerment, and organisational support. This crossroads stood out among the many studies dotting the area as being noticeably sparse, a space filled with resonant quiet (Mathieu, 2016). Our main goal was to address the urgent need for knowledge on how an individual soldier's mental and emotional stability is impacted by their internal psychology and organisational structures.

In contrast to Mathieu's (2016) claims, Brown and Thomas' (2017) hypotheses indicate that Psychological Capital is by far the most important correlation in the well-being matrix, nearly overshadowing all other correlates. This brought up our initial goal, which was to analyse Psychological Capital's effectiveness as a predictor of soldiers wellbeing. In light of this, Roberts (2018)'s spirals of inquiry led us to develop our second goal. In light of Roberts' strong endorsement of the role

of Psychological Empowerment, viewing it as a 'north star' that guides an individual's sense of worth and purpose, the conclusion we draw is multifaceted. Psychological Empowerment, as conceptualized by Roberts, is not merely a component of organisational behaviour but a fundamental driver of an individual's engagement, motivation, and overall sense of fulfilment in their role. This aligns with our findings that suggest Psychological Empowerment is a key factor in enhancing well-being and job satisfaction among individuals, particularly in demanding professions like the military.

Roberts' analogy underscores the transformative power of Psychological Empowerment. When individuals perceive themselves as empowered, they are more likely to feel valued, capable, and motivated, leading to higher levels of job performance and personal well-being (Hayes, 2017). This is particularly significant in hierarchical and structured environments where empowerment can counterbalance rigid organisational constraints, providing a sense of autonomy and self-determination.

Diverging from these paths, a third goal emerged from the research of Anderson and Jackson (2019), who emphasised the sometimes-overlooked Organisational Support and asserted its importance in creating a strong psychological framework for troops. Our fourth and fifth goals further studied the complex dance of generational differences to understand its mediating prowess (or lack thereof) in this complex web, encouraged by the contradictory narratives.

Our nautical map came into focus as we combined these disjointed voices. But as the voyage went on, it became clear that these goals were not isolated or linear. Instead, they created a mosaic that was teeming with connection and beckoned us to go below the surface ripples in order to learn more (D'Souza, 2020). This realisation highlights the research's symphony, a fusion of conflicting voices that harmonised under the wing of our inquisitive spirit.

6.3 Implications of the study

The study carves out a position in the theoretical landscape by shedding light on Psychological Capital's central function and upending the dominance of influential works like Thompson's (2017), which had previously suggested Psychological Empowerment as the epicentre. Our findings, however, demonstrate the fluid

character of these constructs, in keeping with the dynamism advocated by Farley (2018), indicating that the pendulum of prominence may swing depending on a variety of intersecting factors.

The findings have a strong resonance in the arena of real-world operations, where the theoretical abstraction and practical tangibility collide. Military organisations are about to embark on a transformational process. Understanding the nuances of psychological capital creates the foundation for improved operational performance as well as provides a roadmap for healthier warriors. The military training procedures of Mercer (2019) are often used as inspiration, and there is a need to add strong psychological training modules that will boost troops' cognitive reserves. Contrarily, Diaz's warning stories from 2020 call for a delicate balance, assuring that while we pursue the pinnacle of psychological fortitude, the humanitarian side is preserved.

6.4 Limitations of the study

Every research trip always encounters a triad of difficulties that span the logistical, methodological, and contextual domains. Although meticulous, this study was not an exception. According to experts like Thompson (2018), the dependence on self-reported measurements may lead to biases that skew honest reflections. Despite our best efforts, recollection and reaction biases may have steered respondents towards inflated or socially acceptable responses.

Logically, the study's time restrictions forced us to use a cross-sectional strategy. Although this provided a glimpse of troop well-being and its factors, the dynamic inherent in such conceptions is still elusive. According to Franklin (2019), longitudinal studies offer deeper, more nuanced insights, which our study was unable to incorporate.

The research was grounded in certain geopolitical and cultural contexts. Even if the results are surprising, these environments have left their permanent imprint on them. According to Sanchez (2020), cultural quirks are crucial in shaping views, attitudes, and wellbeing, therefore our findings might not be applicable to everyone.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.5.1 For Military Organisations

The route ahead becomes clear as the curtain rises, revealing the complicated ballet of factors that regulate military well-being. According to the results, military institutions would benefit from developing a culture that prioritises psychological well-being above physical prowess. In Hayes' (2017) idea of "whole soldiering," mental fortitude is emphasised as the cornerstone of combat-readiness. However, as Lambert's (2018) critique emphasises, this needs a careful dance - ensuring that while we strengthen the cerebral, the essence of friendship is not overpowered.

6.5.2 For Policymakers

A breath of new perspective is needed in the hallways of policymaking, which are frequently imprisoned in the webs of bureaucracy. That very gust may be provided by our investigation. Policy directions might change as a result of the strength of psychological concepts like capital and empowerment, unlocking their hidden potential. It is a space where Rodriguez's (2020) call for a calculated, not impulsive, policy revamp and Turner's (2019) call for giving mental health priority coexist. The union of the two might mark the beginning of a day when military well-being is not just a section of policy manuals but rather their entire introduction.

6.5.3 For Future Training Protocols

What we prepare for, as the saying goes, determines our outcome. Current training programmes, rooted in tradition, require a sprinkle of the essence of our discoveries. With a basis based on the importance of Psychological Capital, the future may witness cognitive resilience modules. Using Neville's (2018) training approaches, which promote psychological readiness, and a dash of Kim's (2019) cautionary stories, we could create procedures that are both rigorous and compassionate.

6.5.4 Recommendations and Practical Applications Within the Field of IOP

A comprehensive research on positive psychology in terms of soldiers well-being will further enhance and strengthen the force preparation for peacekeeping and future battles. Military deployments are characterised by a plethora of stress, and accumulation of this knowledge will make a great impact in this area.

The better understanding of the factors that contribute to employee well-being and the mediating effect of generational difference is crucial not only to military organisation but also Human Resource practitioners and Industrial psychologist. The information could be filtered into training programmes aimed at developing combat readiness and wellness as well as resilience programs. For the military, this needs a core of confident, competent and educated leadership who is geared to take the SANDF to the next level of military proficiency.

In summary, while generational differences are a compelling aspect of workplace dynamics, their role as mediators in the relationships between Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, Perceived Organisational Support, and Well-being appears limited on this study. This leads us to consider other potential mediating factors, underscoring the need for further research in this area.

6.6 Proposals for Future Research

With the observed restrictions acting as lighthouses, a plethora of research options await inquiry. First and foremost, longitudinal research informed by Franklin's (2019) advocacy would untangle the temporal fluctuations in the constructs we have battled with, allowing us a fuller understanding of the ebb and flow of military well-being.

Furthermore, expanding this study's cultural and geopolitical boundary may provide more broadly relevant conclusions. Gupta's (2021) proposed comparative analysis across militaries from various cultural origins might reveal both shared patterns and distinct variations, resulting in a more comprehensive tapestry of military well-being.

Finally, diving further into the intricacies of training regimens, especially the neurological and physiological effects of psychological empowerment and organisational support, has the potential to bridge the gap between psychological conceptions and their concrete, physical manifestations.

6.7 Final Reflections

This research's tapestry, intertwined with strands of resolve, discovery, and, on sometimes, doubt, has produced a panorama that is as academically rewarding as it is personally transformational. When the researchers began this study, they had

an intellectual curiosity; nevertheless, when the outlines of soldiers' well-being revealed themselves, this turned into a highly resonant, personal involvement.

Challenges were constant companions, as they are in any scholarly undertaking. The enigmatic nature of data, the complexities of human psychology, and even the terrifying quiet preceding an epiphany - all posed their own mysteries. But, in the words of Nietzsche, "what does not kill us makes us stronger," each barrier overcome spurred the research onward. The achievements, whether a nod of approval from a peer-reviewed or the crystallisation of a previously vague notion, gave a profound and unfathomable delight.

The transforming learning experiences were modest yet significant. Realising the interaction of countless aspects in moulding a soldier's well-being, for example, was like peeling layers off an onion, exposing deeper and subtler facts with each layer. Furthermore, my contacts with troops, those unsung heroes, instilled in me a newfound respect for their sacrifices and an acute understanding of the value of well-being in their unique, difficult life.

Lastly, our study, is only one chapter in the ever-changing annals of military well-being. While we have discovered various dimensions, weaved narratives, and explored consequences, the sphere of well-being remains wide and exciting, especially in a sector as complicated as the military. The conversations that begin here will ideally serve as springboards into deeper seas and higher skies, rather than as definitive declarations. The torch has now been passed to the next generation of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, with the sincere expectation that the road towards understanding and improving soldier well-being will continue uninterrupted. As the curtains close on this adventure, a promise is whispered: the conclusion is only a new beginning.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION



(To be signed by research participants)

R ct Title: “The mediating role of Generational difference on the relationship between PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support on the Wellbeing of South African National Defense Force members.”

Capt Babitsanang Selepe, a Ph.D. student from the Department of Industrial Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Rhodes University, has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of this research is to understand the influence of Generational Differences on the contribution of Psychological Capital, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support in predicting the Well-being of South African National Defence Force members. In other words, this study intends to establish the contributions of contextual and personal resources in the safeguarding of South African National Defence Force members on the well-being of soldiers.
2. Rhodes University has given ethical clearance to this research project (2022-5279-6690, **Ethics Approval Number**) and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate by contacting the Ethics Coordinator (ethics-committee@ru.ac.za).
3. The current study, therefore, aims to benefit not only military environments but the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology in understanding the mediating and predicting role of generational difference. It is anticipated that the findings from this study may enable the Military Commanders, HR, and OD professionals to incorporate strategies that can build members' level of PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support, and Wellbeing. Moreover, to be able to advise the military on how to develop targeted policies for attracting, recruiting, and retaining soldiers who are willing to make sacrifices to meet military institutional goals and ultimately mission success.
4. I will participate in the project by completing 4 questionnaires which will take about 15 to 25 minutes to complete using paper-pencil or computer if you opted for an online survey.

5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research.
7. The following risks are associated with my participation: The Research consists of minimal risk of possible covid-19 infection due to person-data collection. The researcher will mitigate the risk by ensuring that all covid-19 protocols and OHS measures are observed and strictly adhered to during assessment. All completed questionnaires will be stored in a locked cabin (quarantined) for 10 days before the researcher can analyze the results.
8. The Researcher intends to publish the research results in the form of a summarized research article in an academic journal for academic purposes, or a book chapter presented at seminars and conferences for academic purposes. The hard copy of the thesis may be kept at the library and the soft copy will be published on the university website. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained, and my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in conducting the research unless I indicate to the contrary/recognize that as a public figure, my identity will inevitably be/become known in which case I agree to and accept the loss of confidentiality.
9. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act, it remains my right to request the Researcher to provide me with a detailed explanation of exactly how confidentiality and anonymity will be achieved. I may request to know how my personal information will be stored securely, for how long it will be stored, and whether it is likely to be used again in further research.
10. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act, I possess the right to receive feedback about this research. The results will not have any identifiers. We will provide the military unit commanders who participated in the research with a summary of the findings upon request. The information can be made available or distributed using their unit library, communication rooms (hardcopy), T-Drive, and the intranet of the DOD. Unless I elect not to receive feedback.
11. Any further questions that I might have regarding the research or my participation will be answered by Babitsanang on 083 8566 875 (cell phone) or lekhulengb@gmail.com (email) and supervisors, Dr. Trust Kabungaidze and Dr. Carol Dineo Diale-Makgetla (co-supervisor) in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, who may be contacted on 062 614 9511 (cell phone) and 079 388 6183 (email) t.kabungaidze@ru.ac.za and c.diale@ru.ac.za.

12. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

13. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I,, have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all the questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurized in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

I **agree/disagree** (SELECT APPLICABLE) with the Researcher's request to take photographs and/or videos of me as part of this research project, recognizing that agreement here is likely to raise the risk of compromising my anonymity and that steps will be taken to ensure this does not happen if my approval is granted.

I **agree/disagree** with the Researcher's request to voice record my comments and opinions during interviews, the purpose of which is to ensure the accurate recording of my views. Furthermore, I have the right to request a copy of the interview transcriptions to confirm that my opinions are accurately recorded.

.....

Participants signature

.....

Date

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION LEAFLET AND INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT



SA military health service
Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

STUDY TITLE: The mediating role of generational difference on the relationship between psychological capital, psychological empowerment, organisational support on the well-being of the SANDF members.

PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR: Capt Babitsanang Selepe, a Ph.D. student from the Department of Industrial Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Rhodes University.

SUPERVISOR: Dr (Ph.D.) Trust Kabungaidze, Industrial Psychologist Lecturer at Psychology Department at Rhodes University

CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr. Carol Dineo Diale-Makgetla, Industrial Psychologist Lecturer at Psychology Department at Rhodes University

MILITARY SUPERVISOR: Maj (Dr) (Ph.D.) Philimon Mogale, SO2 Industrial Psychologist at Military Psychological Institute.

DEAR RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

1. You are invited to participate in a research study that forms part of my formal degree of Doctor of philosophy studies. This information leaflet will help you to decide if you would like to participate. Before you agree to take part, you should fully understand what is involved. You should not agree to take part unless you are completely satisfied with all aspects of the study.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ALL ABOUT?

2. Research exists regarding the relationship between psychological capital, organisational support psychological empowerment, and wellbeing. There is a little research studies within in the South African context on the relationship between these variables, more specifically among South African National Defence Force members. Most of the literature consulted regarding generational differences within the military were from an international perspective, and members of the armed forces themselves did some of the studies. Many of these studies also focused on either a single or only two generations, depending on the time of publication. A common theme across these studies is that, different generations, especially Gen Y, might require the military to develop specific policies for attracting, retaining, and

effectively developing soldiers. The current study will focus on the following generational Cohorts, namely, X (1965–1980), Y (1981–1996), and Z (1997–2012). In this regard, research about these variables could make a valuable contribution to the organization's understanding of psychological capital, psychological empowerment, and organisational support, especially in the military environment.

3. The proposed study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the mediating role of generational difference on the relationship between PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, and Organisational Support for the Wellbeing of the soldiers. Therefore, it is critical for an organization like the SANDF to identify which variables can predict the well-being of soldiers. The idea is to come up with context-specific interventions that encompass the psychological, physical, emotional, and mental well-being of soldiers. These aspects of well-being are important in determining the success of task execution and ultimately, mission success. It is anticipated that the findings from this study will, on a theoretical level, create a model that can be used to measure the contribution of PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support on the well-being of the soldiers and the model can not only be applied within the military units but can be applied to different organization across different age groups.

WHAT WILL YOU BE REQUIRED TO DO IN THE STUDY?

4. The research will be conducted within the borders for members deployed at Ops Corona and at De-Brug for those deploying for Ops Mistral. The research will be conducted in a hall or classroom context or even in military tent with tables and chairs. The researcher will liaise with the Communication officer to distribute the questionnaires to those who signed the informed consent form and collect the completed ones and store them in a safe secure place. and collect the completed ones and store them in safe secure place. This means, hardcopy data will be stored in a Rhodes University Psychology locked office, inside the locked cabin, to which only the researcher and supervisors will have access. Softcopy data will be stored in a password-protected laptop and the folder will be password encrypted, only the PI and supervisors will I have access to it.

5. The training was provided to all communication officers and confidential agreement was signed. The participant's information sheet that will outline research content, purpose and research ethical considerations will be given to the participants and those who agree to participate will sign an informed consent. This means the participant information sheet and consent form will be conducted collectively. After obtaining written informed consent, you, (Participant) will be asked to complete research 4 questionnaires. Questionnaires are, namely; psychological capital, psychological empowerment, wellbeing, organisational support as well

a biographical sheet. The questionnaires which will take about 15 to 25 minutes to complete. Given the nature of the operational military units being often located in remote locations (with often insufficient network coverage), only pen and paper questionnaires will be distributed to those who agree or signed the written consent for participation. This means there won't be an online survey option. If you agreed to participate you will be asked to complete the questionnaire only once, as it is a cross-sectional study. Participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any stage without penalty. No expenses or costs are associated with the participation of this study because the researcher will be the one traveling to these units.

6. As noted above, the researcher will delegate the powers to the information officer to minimize the power of coercion. The researcher also chooses this option in order to minimize or even avoid possible conflict of interest, however, the researcher will be close to the venue, for ensuring that the collection of surveys is done on time and safeguarded once completed. Should it happen that the communication officer is a higher rank than the participants, the researcher will request the secretary of the Officer Commanding of the respective units, which are often civilian personnel to avoid possible conflict of interest. Training will be provided to the person and confidentiality agreement will be signed before the research commences. The researcher will devise all means to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

ARE THERE ANY CONDITIONS THAT MAY EXCLUDE YOU FROM THE STUDY?

7. Research sample will be members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) who are between the rank of a General down to a last rank of Private (Pte). This means reserve forces members would be also included in the present study. Similarly, civilian personnel employed in the SANDF will not be able to participate in the study as they are not eligible to deploy or actively involved in operational duties.

CAN ANY OF THE STUDY PROCEDURES RESULT IN PERSONAL RISK, DISCOMFORT OR INCONVENIENCE?

8. No emotional risk anticipated.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS THAT MAY COME FROM THE STUDY?

9. The current study, therefore, aims to benefit not only military environments but the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology in understanding the mediating and predicting role of generational difference. It is anticipated that the findings from this study may enable the Military Commanders, HR, and OD professionals to incorporate strategies that can build members' level of PsyCap, Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support, and

Wellbeing. Moreover, to be able to advise the military on how to develop tailor-made policies for attracting, recruiting, and retaining soldiers who are willing to make sacrifices to meet military institutional goals and ultimately mission success.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY FINANCIAL COMPENSATION OR INCENTIVE FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY?

10. No financial compensation or incentive for participating in these study.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT IN THIS STUDY?

11. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any stage without any penalty or any negative consequences or future disadvantage whatsoever. You do not even have to provide the reasons for your decision. Your withdrawal will in no way influence your continued care and relationship with the health care team.

HOW WILL CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY BE ENSURED IN THE STUDY?

12. All information obtained during the course of this study is strictly confidential. The study data will be coded so that it will not be linked to your name. Only the researcher, 1MHREC committee members, communication officer and supervisors will have access to the information. The name of the unit or department will not appear in the research report or publication. Additionally, your identity will not be revealed while the study is being conducted or when the study is reported in scientific journals. All data sheets that have been collected will be stored in a secure place as described above in paragraph 4 and not shared with any other person without your permission. Furthermore, permission will be sought from 1MHREC and Defence Intelligence before any publication can occur.

IS THE RESEARCHER QUALIFIED TO CARRY OUT THE STUDY?

13. Yes, the researcher is an Industrial and Organisational Psychologist at Military Psychological Institute. She obtained her Bachelor of Military science on full-time basis and Honours degree in Industrial Psychology from Stellenbosch university, Faculty of military Science (Military Academy). She furthered her studies at Witwatersrand University for Master of Arts in Industrial Psychology on a full-time basis. Currently pursuing her studies in Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Industrial Psychology with Rhodes University.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

14. Yes, the Rhodes University has given ethical clearance to this research project (2022-5279-6690, **Ethics Approval Number**) and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate by contacting the Ethics Coordinator (ethics-committee@ru.ac.za). Also, the 1 Military Hospital Research Ethics Committee have granted approval for the study. All parts of the study will be conducted according to internationally accepted ethical principles.

WHO CAN YOU CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE STUDY?

15. Any further questions that I might have regarding the research or my participation will be answered by Babitsanang on 083 8566 875 (cell phone) or lekhulengb@gmail.com (email) and supervisors, Dr. Trust Kabungaidze and Dr. Carol Dineo Diale-Makgetla (co-supervisor) in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, who may be contacted on 062 614 9511 (cell phone) and 079 388 6183 (email) t.kabungaidze@ru.ac.za and c.diale@ru.ac.za. Moreover, 1 Military Hospital Research Ethics Committee and contact details are 012 314 0013 and email address: 1mil.ethics@gmail.com

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION ACT

16. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act, I possess the right to receive feedback about this research. The results will not have any identifiers. We will provide the military unit commanders who participated in the research with a summary of the findings upon request. The information can be made available or distributed using their unit library, communication rooms (hardcopy), T-Drive, and the intranet of the DOD. Unless I elect not to receive feedback.

17. Security of the information will be upheld at all times, that is, hardcopy completed questionnaires will be stored in locked safe/cabin and softcopy or online data will be stored in the computer protected by password. Data will be captured and analysed in an SPSS software in the password protected computer. The dignity and wellbeing of respondents will be protected at all times.

DECLARATION: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

18. The distribution of the hardcopy questionnaires will be through the communication officer of each respective unit. The researcher will delegate the powers to the information officer to minimize the power of coercion. The researcher also chooses to not administer the survey to avoid conflict of interest, however, the researcher will be close to the venue for ensuring that the collection of surveys is done on time and safeguarded once completed.

Should it happen that the communication officer is the higher rank than the participants, the researcher will request the secretary of the Officer Commanding of the respective units, which are often civilian personnel to minimise or avoid the possible conflict of interest. Training will be provided to the person and confidentiality agreement will be signed before the research. The researcher will devise all means to ensure there is no conflict of interest. The communication officer will be present in the venue at all times to safeguard the process and secure the completed questionnaires, thereafter handover the surveys to the researcher.

A FINAL WORD

19. Your co-operation and participation in the study will be greatly appreciated. Please sign the underneath informed consent if you agree to participate in this study.

APPENDIX C: DECLARATION REGARDING STORAGE OF RESEARCH DATA



sa military health service
 Department: Defence
 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DECLARATION SHEET

Other personal information. Completion of individual data will be reported.

1. Gender (Circle one): Male Female:

DECLARATION REGARDING STORAGE OF RESEARCH DATA

3. In which year were you born?

4. Arm of service:

5. What is your Corp?

6. How long have you worked for the SANDF?

7. Rhodes University Softcopy data will be stored in a password-protected laptop and the folder will be password encrypted for safety purposes, only the PI and supervisors will have access to it. Data will be captured and analysed in an SPSS software in the password protected computer. The dignity and wellbeing of respondents will be protected at all times. The data will be stored for 10 years and only the researcher, supervisors and research ethics committee (Rhodes University and 1MHREC) will have access to the data.

8. Ethnic group. Tick appropriate box below

- African:
- White:
- Indian:
- Coloured:
- Other:

Researcher's name: _____ Please Print)

9. What is your highest level of Education? (Please Tick with a cross X in an appropriate box)

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

- Did not complete High School
- Matric/equivalent
- Diploma and Bachelor's Degree
- Honours, masters and Phd degree,

10. What is your marital status? Tick appropriate box below

- Married
- Widowed:
- Divorced/Separated:
- Never married:
- Living with Spouse:

APPENDIX E: PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT INSTRUMENT

Self-rater version (modified for SANDF context)

Instructions: Below are a number of self-orientations that people may have with regard to their work roles. Using the following scale, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that each one describes your self-orientation.

Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1	I am confident about my ability to do my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	The work that I do as a soldier is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I have significant autonomy (independent) in determining how I do my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	My impact on what happens, within my platoon/ section/company or unit is huge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	My job activities are meaningful to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I have great deal of control over what happens in my platoon/ section or company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I can decide on my own, how to do my own duties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I have mastered the skills necessary to carry out my duties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	The work I do as a soldier is meaningful to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I have significant influence over what happens in my company/platoon/section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my duties and responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX F: PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL (PSYCAP) QUESTIONNAIRE (PCQ)

Self-rater version (modified for SANDF context)

Instructions: Below are statements that describe how you may think about yourself right now. Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

1	I feel confident analysing a long-term problem to a solution.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management or commanders.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I feel confident contributing to discussions about the organisational strategy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I feel confident helping to set targets/ goals in my work area or platoon/section.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	I feel confident contacting people outside my unit (e.g. Army, air force, navy) to discuss problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I feel confident presenting information to a group of colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	If I should find myself stuck at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	At the moment, I am energetically pursuing my work goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	There are many ways around any problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	When I have a setback or a challenge at work, I have trouble recovering from it and, moving on.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I usually manage conflict difficulties one way or another at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	I can be "on my own" so to speak, at work if I have to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	I usually take stressful things at work with a pace/stride.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I can get through difficult times at work because I've experienced difficulty before.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	I feel I can handle many things at a time at this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	When things are unclear for me at work, I usually expect the best.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	When I feel like something will go wrong at work, it usually does happen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	I always look on the bright side of things regarding my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	I'm positive about what will happen to me in the future at my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	In this job, things never work out the way I want them to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I approach this job as if "every cloud has a silver lining" which means "never feel hopeless because difficult times always lead to better days."	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX G: PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

Self-rater 8-item survey (modified for SANDF context)

Instructions: Listed below are statements that represent possible opinions that **YOU** may have about working at the **SANDF**. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking the number on your answer sheet that best

represents your point of view about your organisation. Please choose from the following answers: **CIRCLE the appropriate answer.**

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

1	The organization values my contribution to its well-being.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	The organization would ignore any complaints from me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	The organization would really care about my well-being.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice those efforts.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	The organization shows very little concern for me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX H: THE WARWICK-EDINBURGH MENTAL WELL-BEING SCALE (WEMWBS)

Self-rater version (modified for SANDF context)

Instructions: Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please **CIRCLE** in the appropriate box that best describes your experiences of each over the last **TWO (2) WEEKS**.

NONE OF THE TIME	RARELY	SOME OF THE TIME	OFTEN	ALL OF THE TIME
1	2	3	4	5

1	I've been feeling optimistic (positive) about the future.	1	2	3	4	5
----------	---	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

2	I've been feeling useful.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I've been feeling relaxed.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I've been feeling interested in other people.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I've had the energy to do extra.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I've been dealing with problems well.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I've been thinking clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I've been feeling good about myself.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I've been feeling close to other people.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I've been feeling confident.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I've been able to make up my own mind about things.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I've been feeling loved.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I've been interested in new things.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I've been feeling cheerful.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX I: SANDF ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

RESTRICTED

1MH/302/6/04.10.2022



sa military health service
Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Telephone: 012 314 0013
Facsimile: 012 314 0013
Enquiries: Dr / Maj. M.L. Kekana

1 Military Hospital
Private Bag x 1023
Thaba Tshwane
0143
19 January 2023

CLINICAL TRIAL APPROVAL: STUDY NUMBER: 04.10.2022: "THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT ON WELLBEING OF SANDF MEMBERS"

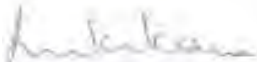
1. The 1 Military Hospital Research Ethics Committee (1MHREC) registered in South Africa with the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC) (REC-111208-019-RA) adhering to GCP/ICH and SA Clinical Trial guidelines, evaluated the above-mentioned protocol and additional documents.

2. The following documents were evaluated:

- a. Personalised Covering Letter from Principal Investigator
- b. Research Proposal
- c. Participant Information Leaflet and Informed Consent Document
- d. Demographic Information Sheet
- e. Data Capturing Sheet
- f. Psychological Capital Questionnaire
- g. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale
- h. Psychological Empowerment Instrument
- i. Perceived Organisational Support
- j. Declaration of Storage of Data
- k. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
- l. Letter of Approval from Rhodes University
- m. Letter of Permission from Defence Intelligence
- n. Letter of Permission from Director Psychology
- o. Letter of Permission from General Officer Commanding Joint Operational Headquarters HQ
- p. Updated Curricula Vitae:
 - i. B.A. Selepe
 - ii. P. Mogale
 - iii. T. Kabungaidze
 - iv. C.D. Diale

3. The recommendations are: The study was ethically approved on 19 January 2023. The approved Principal Investigator is Capt. B.A. Selepe.

4. The study is granted research ethics approval for a period of 12 months. At the end of this period the Principal Investigator must apply for re-approval of the study. Failure to re-apply will result in approval expiring and data generated after the 12-month period, not being able to be included as part of the research project.
5. Report backs are to be made to the 1MHREC annually. In the event of any serious adverse events the researcher must submit reports every 3 months and on completion or termination of the study. Research ethics approval is granted subject to concurrent ongoing approval from Military Defence Intelligence and the relevant study supervisors and overseers.
6. The research study was classified as a low risk study and therefore the PI needs to submit yearly progress reports to the 1MHREC
7. Should publications result from the study, the relevant manuscripts will also need to be approved by Military Defence Intelligence as well as the 1MHREC.
8. All funds generated through this research study must be paid into an approved Regimental Fund account.
9. The onus lies with the PI to comply with the abovementioned requirements. Failure to comply with the requirements will lead to approval of the study being revoked. Furthermore, the 1MHREC will inform publishing houses to withdraw presentations and/or publications if the PI failed to obtain permission from 1MHREC and Defence Intelligence before any presentations or publications were made.
10. The 1 MHREC wishes you success with the study.



(M.L. KEKANA)

CHAIRPERSON 1 MILITARY HOSPITAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE:
MAJ

DIST

For Action

Capt. B.A. Selepe

Appendix J: Approval from defence intelligence



RESTRICTED

defence intelligence

Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Registry

Telephone: 012 315 0161
Extension: 816 0161
Facsimile: 012 328 3246
Enquiries: Lt Col M.C. Bapela

DI/DDS/R/2021/3/7

Defence Intelligence
Private Bag X367
Pretoria
0001

14 June 2022

AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE (DOD): CAPT B.A. SELEPE

1. Receipt of a request letter 05000872MC/R/104/10/5 dated 07 June 2022 to conduct research in the DOD with a Research Proposal attached as per requirement is hereby acknowledged.
2. Permission is hereby granted from a security perspective to Capt B.A. Selepe to conduct research in the DOD on a topic entitled "The Mediating Role of Generational Difference on the relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Psychological Empowerment, Organisational Support on the Wellbeing of South African National Defence Force members" as a precondition for the attainment of a Degree (PhD in Industrial and Organisational Psychology) at Rhodes University as requested.
3. After the completion of the research, the final research product must be forwarded to Defence Intelligence Division (DI), Sub-Division Counter Intelligence (SDCI) for final authorisation before it may be published or distributed to any entity outside the DOD.
4. Approval is however granted on condition that there is strict adherence to inter alia DODI 2/99 "Disclosure of Defence Information" and Section 104 of the Defence Act (Act 42 of 2000) pertaining to protection of DOD Classified Information and the consequences of non-compliance.
5. For your attention.


(M.E. PHENDANI)
DIRECTOR DEPARTMENTAL SECURITY: BRIG GEN
BA/SA /Capt B.A. Selepe

Appendix K: Intellectual property permission

babitsanang lekhuleng



To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for babitsanang lekhuleng to use the following copyright material:

Instrument: *Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Questionnaire (PCQ)*

Authors: *Fred Luthans, Bruce J. Avolio & James B. Avey.*

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for his/her thesis/dissertation research.

Three sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Khetu".

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Appendix L: Rhodes University Ethics approval letter



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committ

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t: +27 (0) 46 603 77:

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e: ethics-committee@ru.ac.

NHREC Registration number: RC-241114-0

<https://www.ru.ac.za/researchgateway/ethic>

29 June 2022

Capt. Babitsanang Annah Selepe
Email: g21s1967@campus.ru.ac.za
Review Reference: 2022-5279-6713

Dear Capt. Babitsanang Annah Selepe

Title: The mediating role of generational difference on the relationship between psychological capital, psychological empowerment, organizational support on the wellbeing of the SANDF members.

Researcher: Capt. Babitsanang Annah Selepe
Supervisor(s): Dr Trust Kabungaidze, Ms Carol Dineo Diale

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee (RU-HREC). Your Approval number is: 2022-5279-6713

Approval has been granted for 1 year. An annual progress report will be required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying you when the annual report is due.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on the completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.

Sincerely,