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CORRELATES, DIFFERENCES, AND PREVALENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT, POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AT WORK, AND COMMON EMOTIONAL DISORDERS AMONG WORKERS DURING THE PERIOD OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

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ABSTRACT: Introduction: Studies in the field of people and organizational management within the world of work have highlighted functional and organizational behavior changes capable of influencing workers' health. Thus, with new conceptions of labor self-determination, employability, and its maintenance, the worker–organization dyad has been challenged to develop strategies aimed at sustaining healthy competitiveness. **Objective**: To examine the relationship between organizational support, knowledge management, positive psychological capital, and the perception of general health behavior among employees of public and private organizations in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. **Method**: A total of 402 workers participated in the study, responding to a sociodemographic questionnaire, the perceived organizational support scale, knowledge management scale, positive psychological capital scale, and the general health scale. **Results**: The findings revealed that organizational support positively influences knowledge management, which in turn affects positive psychological capital, and this, in turn, influences workers' general health, reinforcing the importance of integrated organizational practices for occupational well-being. **Conclusion**: The proposed model contributed to the development of healthier and more sustainable work environments.

Keywords: Organizational support; Positive psychological capital; General health; Public and private organizations.

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Correlatos, Diferenças E Prevalências Entre Suporte Organizacional, Capital Psicológico Positivo No Trabalho E Transtorno Emocional Comum Em Trabalhadores No Período De Isolamento Social

RESUMO: Introdução: Os estudos na área da gestão de pessoas e organizações, no mundo do trabalho, têm destacado as mudanças funcionais e do comportamento organizacional capazes de influenciar na saúde do trabalhador. Assim, com as novas concepções sobre autodeterminação laboral, empregabilidade e manutenção desta, tem sido imposto, no binômio trabalhador-organização, a necessidade do desenvolvimento de estratégias para manutenção de uma competitividade saudável. **Objetivo:** Verificar a relação entre suporte organizacional, gestão do conhecimento, capital psicológico positivo e percepção da conduta de saúde geral dos funcionários de organizações públicas e privadas, no estado do Rio Grande do Norte. **Método:** Participaram da pesquisa 402 trabalhadores que responderam os dados sociodemográficos, a escala de percepção do suporte organizacional, gestão de conhecimento, capital psicológico positivo e a escala saúde geral. **Resultados**: Os resultados revelaram que o suporte organizacional influencia positivamente a gestão do conhecimento, que por sua vez, o capital psicológico positivo e este, a saúde geral dos trabalhadores, reforçando a importância de práticas organizacionais integradas para o bem-estar laboral. **Conclusão**: A proposta do modelo contribuiu para a construção de ambientes laborais mais saudáveis e sustentáveis.

Palavras-Chave: Suporte organizacional; Capital psicológico positivo; Saúde geral; Organizações públicas e privadas.

Correlatos, diferencias y prevalencias entre el apoyo organizacional, el capital psicológico positivo en el trabajo y el trastorno emocional común en trabajadores durante el período de aislamiento social

RESUMEN: Introducción: Los estudios en el ámbito de la gestión de personas y de las organizaciones, en el mundo del trabajo, han destacado los cambios funcionales y del comportamiento organizacional capaces de influir en la salud de los trabajadores. Así, con las nuevas concepciones sobre la autodeterminación laboral, la empleabilidad y su mantenimiento, se ha impuesto al binomio trabajador–organización la necesidad de desarrollar estrategias para sostener una competitividad saludable. **Objetivo**: Verificar la relación entre el soporte organizacional, la gestión del conocimiento, el capital psicológico positivo y la percepción de la conducta de salud general de los empleados de organizaciones públicas y privadas del estado de Rio Grande do Norte. **Método**: Participaron en la investigación 402 trabajadores, quienes respondieron un cuestionario sociodemográfico, la escala de percepción del soporte organizacional, la escala de gestión del conocimiento, la escala de capital psicológico positivo y la escala de salud general. **Resultados**: Los resultados revelaron que el soporte organizacional

influye positivamente en la gestión del conocimiento, la cual, a su vez, influye en el capital psicológico positivo y este, en la salud general de los trabajadores, reforzando la importancia de prácticas organizacionales integradas para el bienestar laboral. **Conclusión**: La propuesta del modelo contribuyó a la construcción de entornos laborales más saludables y sostenibles.

Palabras clave: Apoyo organizacional; Capital psicológico positivo; Salud general; Organizaciones públicas y privadas.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary work environment is shaped by multiple and dynamic contexts of change, including technological, socioeconomic, and political transformations. These shifts have required organizations to strategically adapt their modes of operation, becoming more efficient and entrepreneurial, while simultaneously responding to increasing institutional pressures for ethical, equitable, and socially responsible practices (Estevam, Formiga, Gibson, 2023; Souza et al., 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the novel coronavirus, resulted in 6,646,562 deaths and 649,244,427 confirmed cases worldwide between January 2020 and December 2022. In the absence of effective treatments and vaccines at the onset, governments implemented restrictive measures such as social distancing, lockdowns, and closure of public spaces to mitigate virus transmission (Anderson et al., 2020; Bedford et al., 2020).

Within this context, the field of Human Resource Management (HRM) emphasizes the strategic role of human talent in developing and sustaining core organizational competencies, aligned with institutional goals (Fleury & Fleury, 2004; Nunes, 2017; Mussa & Formiga, 2024). According to Formiga and Souza (2019; Estevam et al., 2022), professional routines encompass two types of activities: (1) formal role-prescribed tasks, defined by contractual obligations, and (2) voluntary, discretionary behaviors, driven by collaborative intentions toward the organization and peers, commonly conceptualized as the psychological contract.

Individual priorities and values directly influence organizational actions. In this regard, cognitive adaptability and human values are recognized as key antecedents of entrepreneurial behavior (Sawicki et al., 2022; Taylor, 2019). This perspective not only highlights the importance of employee well-being and quality of life, but also underscores the relevance of overall health outcomes for both individuals and organizations (Prado, 2005; Sobrinho & Porto, 2012; Bertoncello & Borges-Andrade, 2015; Estivalete et al., 2016).

This issue becomes particularly urgent due to the relative invisibility of emotional and behavioral disturbances in the workplace, which are often normalized as "natural" aspects of professional life. Such normalization tends to underestimate the magnitude and severity of the problem, masking its predictive consequences for individual and organizational outcomes (Estevam et al., 2022; Fidelis et al., 2022).

The negative impacts of emotional distress on workers' health and on the quality of care provided have been widely documented, including symptoms such as stress, low self-esteem, and demotivation (Edward et al., 2014; Batista et al., 2011; Hirschle & Gondim, 2020). Additionally, common mental disorders (CMDs) have been associated with workplace adversity, encompassing non-psychotic psychiatric symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, sadness, fatigue, memory

impairment, concentration difficulties, irritability, somatic complaints, and workplace harassment (Vasconcellos et al., 2012; Pai et al., 2015; Formiga et al., 2020).

The present study seeks to integrate psychological constructs that have been rarely examined in combination. A review of national scientific databases (e.g., CAPES) over the past decade revealed a lack of studies directly addressing the interplay among the constructs proposed here. Therefore, this study aims to test a theoretical model examining the associations between perceived organizational support (POS), positive psychological capital (PsyCap), and emotional distress (stress, anxiety, and depression) among workers, comparing these relationships across pre-, during-, and post-pandemic periods in Brazil.

The need to understand how these variables influence physical and psychological well-being has contributed to the emergence of Positive Psychology, defined as the scientific study of factors that promote the development of positive human functioning in individuals, groups, and institutions. This includes constructs such as quality of life, hope, subjective well-being, and self-efficacy (Pires et al., 2015; Ferreira & Lamas, 2020). This approach emphasizes the pursuit of authentic happiness, grounded in three dimensions: positive emotions, engagement, and meaning (Scorsolini-Comin & Santos, 2019; Formiga, Sena et al., 2024).

Positive Psychology proposes that individuals' lives are shaped by elements that contribute to their well-being and fulfillment (Compton & Hoffman, 2019). Research by Ribeiro et al. (2018) and Silva & Tolfo (2012) suggests that happiness should not be reduced to mere well-being, but rather understood as a stable, socially constructed state of predominantly positive experiences, linked to life purpose and meaning across material, relational, and spiritual dimensions. These conditions are embedded within organizational systems, particularly through the support provided by organizations to their employees.

The Organizational Support Theory (OST) posits that employees develop a global perception based on how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Formiga, Sena et al., 2024). Positive perceptions emerge from consistent expressions of recognition, approval, and both social and material rewards, reinforcing employee engagement and reciprocity (Oliveira-Castro et al., 1999; Formiga et al., 2021; Nogueira & Oliveira, 2022).

According to Ramadan et al. (2022), perceived organizational support strengthens the employee–organization relationship, fostering loyalty, emotional involvement, and a greater willingness to innovate—even in the absence of direct rewards. Similarly, Formiga, Paula, and Silva (2022) highlight that organizational support involves reciprocal exchanges, in which organizations fulfill legal, moral, and financial obligations, resulting in improved performance, commitment, and positive outcomes.

Organizational support that encompasses both emotional and professional dimensions is essential to enhance productivity and performance. While job characteristics and self-efficacy significantly influence work engagement, perceived organizational support alone may not exert a direct effect (Sulistyo & Suhartini, 2019; Formiga et al., 2020). However, when combined, these factors significantly impact engagement, fostering a shared understanding that employee well-being is a co-responsibility, thereby encouraging greater emotional investment at work—conceptualized in this study as positive psychological capital.

The concept of psychological capital (PsyCap) originates from positive organizational behavior and focuses on understanding human strengths in optimal functioning. This paradigm shift

incorporates constructs such as hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy, emphasizing human virtues and strengths (Nogueira & Oliveira, 2022; Formiga et al., 2020; Franco & Formiga, 2022).

Empirical and theoretical studies (Geremias & Lopes Soares, 2021) suggest that PsyCap is a key emerging construct associated with multiple positive outcomes. It reflects an optimistic outlook, increased likelihood of success, and enhanced persistence. Bento et al. (2023) further highlight its relevance for organizational competitiveness, performance, and the promotion of healthy workplaces, while also noting potential negative effects at excessively high levels.

As outlined by Bay, Er, and Payli (2023), PsyCap is grounded in Positive Psychology and focuses on improving experiences, fostering positive personality traits, and enhancing social interactions. It is considered a core component of organizational performance and sustainability. According to pioneers such as Fred Luthans, PsyCap represents an evolution of organizational capital, based on synergistic human strengths that together produce outcomes greater than the sum of their parts.

In light of these considerations, the present study aims to analyze the relationship between perceived organizational support, positive psychological capital, and emotional distress among workers, comparing variations in mean scores across the pre-, during-, and post-social isolation periods associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODS

Study Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive, and correlational design. A survey-based approach was employed to collect data from a sample of the target population, aiming to obtain a direct assessment of the investigated phenomenon.

Procedures

Participants were invited to voluntarily take part in the study through an anonymous and confidential online questionnaire. Invitations were disseminated via email, social media, and other digital platforms. Individuals were informed that they could complete the survey at their convenience, either in their workplace or outside of it, by accessing a link to the research instrument.

Before starting the questionnaire, participants were informed about the study objectives and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. A trained researcher was available via email and mobile phone (at no cost to participants) to address questions and provide support when necessary.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a survey method with non-probabilistic, purposive sampling, including only participants who agreed to participate and completed the questionnaire in full.

To ensure data robustness and heterogeneity, data collection was structured across three distinct time points related to the COVID-19 pandemic: Pre-pandemic (July 2019), During the pandemic (November 2021), Post-pandemic (February 2022)

The same data collection procedures were applied across all periods, with all surveys administered electronically due to public health restrictions.

All procedures complied with ethical standards for research involving human subjects, as established by the Brazilian National Health Council (CNS) and the National Association for Research and Graduate Studies in Psychology (ANPEPP). The study protocols were approved by the National Research Ethics Commission (CONEP) via Plataforma Brasil under the following CAAE numbers: 83102917.2.0000.5296 (2019), 48983621.8.0000.5296 (2021), and 32211720.3.0000.8124 (2022). Separate protocols were required due to the different data collection periods and contextual conditions.

Sample Size and Participants

Sample size was calculated using G*Power 3.2 (Faul et al., 2007), considering a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$), an effect size of $r \geq 0.50$, and a statistical power of ≥ 0.80. Additionally, following recommendations by Hair et al. (2010), a minimum of 5–10 participants per observed variable and at least 100 participants overall were considered adequate for multivariate analyses.

Based on these criteria, a total sample of 450 workers (men and women with at least one year of work experience) was deemed sufficient to achieve reliable statistical estimates ($t \geq 1.98$, power ≥ 0.97, $p < 0.05$). For comparative analyses across time periods, 150 participants were included in each phase (pre-, during-, and post-pandemic), maintaining statistical adequacy ($t \geq 1.98$, power ≥ 0.92 per group, $p < 0.05$).

Inclusion criteria were being an active worker employed in public and/or private organizations, including salaried employees, service providers, or self-employed individuals. Exclusion criteria included: being on medical leave, vacation, retired, or failing to complete the questionnaire.

Measures

The following validated instruments were used:

- **Perceived Organizational Support Scale (POS):** Originally developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) and adapted to the Brazilian context by Siqueira (1995), this 9-item scale assesses the extent to which employees perceive that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Previous Brazilian studies have demonstrated adequate reliability and factorial validity.

- **Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ – Short Version):** Based on the work of Luthans et al. (2007), this 12-item version assesses positive psychological capital (PsyCap), comprising self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. Responses are rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree).

- **Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21):** Developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995), this instrument consists of 21 items divided into three subscales: depression, anxiety, and stress. Responses are given on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = does not apply to me at all to 3 = applies to me very much).

Sociodemographic Questionnaire Included variables such as gender, age, employment status, professional qualification, and length of service.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25.0 and AMOS Graphics 25.0. Initially, data screening procedures were performed, including detection of multivariate outliers and assessment of normality using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. Common method bias was assessed using Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Descriptive and inferential analyses included Student's t-tests and Pearson's correlation coefficients.

Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.70$), composite reliability (CR ≥ 0.70), and average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50). To test the proposed theoretical model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were conducted using the Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimator, based on the covariance matrix of observed variables. Model fit was evaluated using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, including: χ^2/df (Chi-square/degrees of freedom), GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index), AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index), RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), ECVI (Expected Cross-Validation Index), CAIC (Consistent Akaike Information Criterion).

Additionally, discriminant validity was assessed using the HTMT ratio (Heterotrait-Monotrait). Finally, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with Scheffé post hoc tests was performed to examine statistically significant differences between groups across the three time periods.

RESULTS

Data collected across three time points (2019, 2021, and 2022) were initially subjected to data quality assessment procedures. Regarding multicollinearity, correlation coefficients met the criteria established by Tabachnick and Fidell (2018), with acceptable thresholds of $r \leq 0.90$. Observed correlations ranged from 0.23 to 0.72 (2019), −0.17 to 0.76 (2021), and 0.16 to 0.84 (2022), supporting the development of correlational and predictive models with low measurement error.

Normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) test, indicating adequate distribution and absence of problematic multivariate outliers across all time points: 2019 (K–S = 0.58, $p < 0.19$), 2021 (K–S = 0.75, $p < 0.32$), and 2022 (K–S = 0.37, $p < 0.23$) (Nascimento et al., 2014).

The total sample comprised 450 workers, predominantly female (59%), with a mean age of 37.26 years (SD = 10.09) and an average length of employment of 15.6 years (SD = 6.33). Regarding occupational sectors, 48% were employed in the private sector, 43% in the public sector, and 9% did not report. Additionally, 62% reported working across two shifts.

Considering that the measurement instruments had been previously validated in Brazilian worker samples in recent studies, factorial invariance and structure were re-examined. The results supported the unidimensional structure of the Perceived Organizational Support scale, the four-factor structure of Positive Psychological Capital, and the three-factor structure of the DASS-21.

Through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), allowing covariances (φ) to be freely estimated, the psychometric indicators provided theoretical and empirical support for the factorial structures

across all three time points. All factor loadings (λ) fell within the expected range (0–1), were statistically significant ($t > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$), and exceeded 0.50, indicating strong item–factor relationships.

Reliability and validity indices were also satisfactory: Composite reliability (CR) > 0.70 Average variance extracted (AVE) > 0.50 Cronbach's alpha > 0.70

These results confirm the internal consistency and construct validity of the measures used, supporting their adequacy for further analyses (Hair et al., 2010; Maroco, 2010).

Based on these findings, the main objective—examining the influence of perceived organizational support on positive psychological capital and emotional distress was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). A recursive structural model was specified to evaluate the primary hypothesis, considering the pooled dataset across the three time points.

After appropriate model adjustments, the proposed model demonstrated adequate goodness-of-fit indices: $\chi^2/df = 2.18$, RMR = 0.07, GFI = 0.94, AGFI = 0.97, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.05 (90% CI: 0.03–0.09).

Figure 1 presents the standardized path coefficients (λ), confirming the expected relationships among the constructs. All path coefficients were statistically significant ($t > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$) and within acceptable limits.

Perceived organizational support was positively associated with positive psychological capital, which, in turn, was negatively associated with emotional distress (DASS-21), indicating a protective effect of psychological resources on mental health outcomes.

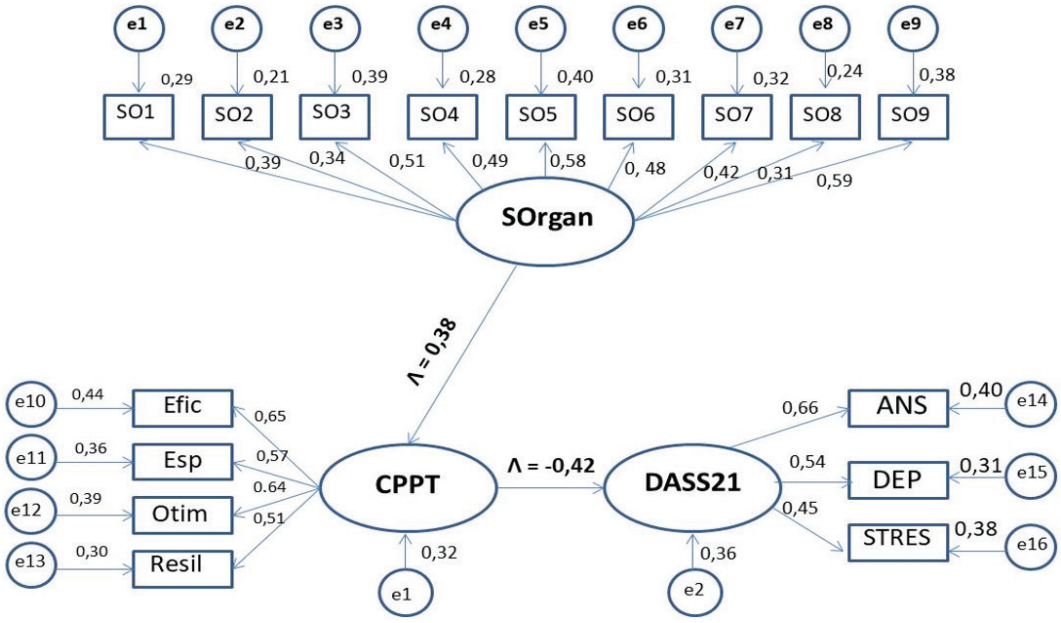

Figure 1 – Graphical representation of the predictive model of emotional distress.

The influences highlighted within the proposed theoretical model emphasize new approaches in human resource management within organizations, particularly regarding practices that promote more positive organizational behavior, as well as those that stimulate and sustain workers' satisfaction and health.

In this context, Formiga, Freire, Azevedo, Nascimento, Franco, Oliveira, Prochazka, and Grangeiro (2021) demonstrated the confirmation of alternative scenarios, suggesting that perceived organizational support plays a significant role in explaining future expectations when mediated by positive psychological capital. After confirming the theoretical model for the total sample, a similar statistical analysis was conducted considering sample-specific characteristics.

Following the confirmation of the theoretical model, a comparative statistical analysis was performed. An ANOVA was conducted to evaluate differences in mean scores between dependent and independent variables (see Table 1). The ANOVA results, combined with the Scheffé post hoc test, revealed statistically significant differences across all variables according to the data collection periods.

Specifically, positive psychological capital (PPC) showed higher scores at the end of the social isolation period; perceived organizational support (POS) was higher during the period of social isolation; and emotional distress (DASS-21) was also higher during social isolation. All these differences were statistically significant.

The Scheffé test further indicated that PPC was most demanded among professionals at the end of the COVID-19 social isolation period (c > a > b). In contrast, POS presented the highest scores during the isolation period (b > a > c). Similarly, DASS-21 scores were also highest during the period of social isolation (b > a > c).

Table 1 – Differences in mean scores across constructs according to the data collection period

Constructs	Period	Mean Score	SD	Statistic (Friedman)	df	p-value
PPC	Before COVID	46.86[a]	7.44	9.47	2	0.001
	During COVID	44.34[b]	8.07			
	End of COVID	48.68[c]	7.17			
	Total	46.29	7.80			
POS	Before COVID	36.54[a]	9.30	5.28	2	0.001
	During COVID	39.97[b]	9.62			
	End of COVID	33.62[c]	13.56			
	Total	38.40	9.60			
DASS-21	Before COVID	33.40[a]	14.12	11.51	2	0.001
	During COVID	44.09[b]	24.03			
	End of COVID	40.71[c]	16.80			
	Total	38.57	18.22			

Soure: Authors' own elaboration

A similar statistical analysis to that performed in Table 2 was conducted to compare the type of work arrangement adopted (i.e., home office, on-site, or hybrid) and its influence on PPC, POS, and DASS-21 (emotional distress).

Based on the one-way ANOVA results, only the PPC construct showed higher scores for the on-site work arrangement, while DASS-21 presented higher scores in the home office condition.

Table 2 – Differences in mean scores across constructs according to the type of work arrangement adopted by participants.

Constructs	Work Arrangement	Mean Score	SD	Statistic (Friedman)	df	p-value
PPC	On-site	**44.81**[a]	**7.44**	5.31	2	0.001
	Home office	41.48[b]	8.07			
	Both (Hybrid)	42.56[c]	7.17			
	Total	43.65	7.80			
POS	On-site	37.77[a]	7.77	0.62	2	0.62
	Home office	37.34[b]	6.45			
	Both (Hybrid)	36.37[c]	7.39			
	Total	37.16	7.22			
DASS-21	On-site	46.87[a]	19.25	3.81	2	0.01
	Home office	**52.50**[b]	**17.46**			
	Both (Hybrid)	43.04[c]	15.43			
	Total	46.29	17.92			

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

A univariate ANOVA was also conducted to assess both the main and interaction effects between sample type, levels of PPC, and levels of POS on DASS-21 scores.

The results indicated main effects for sample type, PPC, and POS. Specifically, higher DASS-21 (emotional distress) scores were observed in the sample collected during the COVID-19 period, as well as among individuals with lower PPC and lower POS levels.

Regarding the interaction effect, it was observed that in the sample collected during COVID-19, a low level of PPC combined with a moderate level of POS was associated with DASS-21 scores ($F(390/2) = 2.44$, $p < 0.05$; $R^2 = 0.16$). These results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 – Differences in mean scores across PPC, POS, and sample type as a function of participants' emotional distress (DASS-21).

Sample Type	PPC Level	POS Level	Mean Score	SD
Before COVID	Low	Low	2.235	0.134
		Moderate	2.000	0.390
		High	1.500	0.390
	Moderate	Low	1.923	0.125
		Moderate	1.375	0.276
		High	1.714	0.295
	High	Low	1.583	0.130
		Moderate	1.250	0.276
		High	1.500	0.247

Sample Type	PPC Level	POS Level	Mean Score	SD
During COVID	Low	Low	2.395	0.127
		Moderate	**2.500**	0.225
		High	2.154	0.216
	Moderate	Low	2.172	0.145
		Moderate	1.769	0.216
		High	1.667	0.260
	High	Low	1.824	0.189
		Moderate	2.000	0.295
		High	1.750	0.225
End of COVID	Low	Low	2.471	0.189
		Moderate	—	—
		High	—	—
	Moderate	Low	2.189	0.128
		Moderate	—	—
		High	—	—
	High	Low	1.649	0.128
		Moderate	—	—
		High	—	—

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Based on these results, percentage rates were calculated to assess the impact of different conditions according to the period (before, during, and after social isolation) and the type of work arrangement adopted (on-site, home office, and hybrid), in relation to positive psychological capital, organizational support, and emotional distress (see Chart 1).

Regarding the data collection period, it was observed that after the social isolation period, positive psychological capital recovered, as this construct showed negative levels during social isolation. Concerning emotional distress, a high percentage was observed during the isolation period. That is, from the isolation context to the post-isolation period, participants showed a reduction in these rates, indicating a recovery of mental health processes, particularly in anxiety, depression, and stress.

However, a noteworthy finding concerns perceived organizational support. It was expected that this construct would present higher percentages after the isolation period—even considering the challenges experienced during COVID-19—but instead, a negative percentage was observed. This finding is understandable, as organizational support is a construct inherently linked to the workplace dynamic, which often requires the worker's physical presence. This condition was gradually reestablished as employees returned to their work environments.

When considering the type of work arrangement, it is evident how challenging it was to develop positive psychological capital under the home office condition, with improvements observed when work was performed in a hybrid format. A particularly notable result is the increase

in emotional distress among workers in the home office condition, which decreased when they transitioned to hybrid work arrangements.

Additionally, the low rate of improvement in perceived organizational support stands out, as it remained low during home office work but increased when workers were engaged in both work formats. This pattern is also understandable, given that the development of this construct is typically associated with work dynamics and the professional environment, as presented in Chart 1.

Chart 1 – Percentage impact of changes in mean scores across constructs according to the social isolation period and type of work arrangement.

Variables	Período	Mean Scores	Growth Rate
Positive Psychological Capital at Work	Before	46,86	0
	During	44.34	-5.38%
	After	48.68	9.79%
Organizational Support	Before	36.54	0
	During	39,97	9.39%
	After	33.62	-15.89%
DASS-21 (Common Emotional Disorder)	Before	33,4	0
	During	44.09	32.01%
	After	40.71	-7.67%
Variables	**By work arrangement adopted**	**Mean Scores**	**Growth Rate**
Positive Psychological Capital at Work	On-site	44.81	0
	Home office	41.48	-7.43%
	Hybrid	42.56	2.60%
Organizational Support	On-site	37.77	0
	Home office	37.34	-1.14%
	Hybrid	36.37	-2.60%
DASS-21 (Common Emotional Disorder)	On-site	46.87	0
	Home office	52,5	12.01%
	Hybrid	43.04	-18.02%

According to the results presented, the influences among the variations in the proposed theoretical model point to new approaches in human resource management within organizations, particularly regarding practices that promote more positive organizational behavior, as well as those that stimulate and sustain workers' satisfaction and health.

In this context, Formiga, Freire, Azevedo, Nascimento, Franco, Oliveira, Prochazka, and Grangeiro (2021) demonstrated the confirmation of alternative scenarios, suggesting that perceived organizational support plays a significant role in explaining future expectations when mediated by positive psychological capital.

DISCUSSION

In general, the statistical indicators showed that the scales used in the study presented good alpha scores and are statistically significant. This confirms the reliability of the instruments in relation to the construct and measurement, ensuring a safe evaluation related to organizational support, positive psychological capital, and common emotional disorders before, during, and after social isolation.

Thus, when relating the psychological constructs—still little explored based on the linearity of evaluating the COVID phenomenon at different social moments within the organization–worker binomial—only the study by Estevam, Formiga, Franco, Bonifácio, Ferreira, Costa, Ferreira, Pereira (2022) was found. This study addressed the topic in a sample of nurses before social isolation in the city of Natal-RN, highlighting a positive relationship between organizational support, positive psychological capital, and general health.

Theoretical and empirical studies have supported the idea that PsyCap (Psychological Capital) is an essential emerging construct associated with various positive outcomes. This construct enables an important assessment of the likelihood of work success, emphasizing effort and perseverance as significant motivators. PsyCap therefore plays a fundamental role in promoting positive attitudes and boosting motivation (Franco & Formiga, 2022; Nogueira & Oliveira, 2022).

Regarding psychological capital, as highlighted by Pincheira and Garcés (2023) in the organizational context, it stands out for its relationship with reduced absenteeism and increased commitment and job performance. This positive resource contributes to well-being by mitigating the effects of depression and anxiety among workers. Furthermore, positive psychological capital plays a crucial role as a moderator between organizational climate and performance, acting as a protective factor against the adverse effects of burnout.

In line with positive psychological capital at work, Geremias, Lopes, and Soares (2021) explain that workers with high levels of psychological capital deal more effectively with errors, failures, and setbacks, not allowing challenges to prevent them from achieving high levels of performance. These factors encourage individuals to seek relevant approaches to clearly define their goals and procedures. Psychological capital also plays a crucial role in revealing individual psychological factors associated with structuring processes during social isolation, a condition that was highly consistent with the findings of this study.

From a similar perspective, Bento, Silva, Pais, and Rebelo dos Santos (2023) explain that the components of Psychological Capital at Work (PsyCap) are emerging psychological concepts representing positive capacities, impacting competitiveness, performance, and the development of healthier organizations. The results highlight the relationships between Organizational Support and PsyCap elements (Self-efficacy, Hope, Resilience, and Optimism), as both are associated with positivity, performance, persistence, and adaptation to environmental uncertainties.

In the study by Formiga et al. (2021) with workers in general, this association already showed strong convergence, especially when mediated by a variable monitoring workers' expectations. According to the authors, perceived organizational support influenced future expectations, with positive psychological capital mediating this relationship. For them, the importance of organizational emotional investment (through psychological capital) in shaping future expectations contributes both to better functioning in employees' social and personal lives and to the possibility of establishing an agenda for emotional and functional education within organizations.

In the study by Valin et al. (2022) with Brazilian teachers, the authors observed that, in the participants' view, organizational support (considering the human-institutional support of the school) was associated with psychological capital, which in turn was related to perceived general health (both in total scores and in its dimensions, such as depression and social dysfunction).

Estevam et al. (2024) developed research based on the premise that healthy interpersonal relationships are fundamental for well-being, productivity, and the quality of interactions in the academic environment. Their study investigated how relational dynamics influence communication, collaboration, and work performance when associated with the impact of Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap)—comprising self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience—in the organizational environment. The authors observed that positive interpersonal relationships highlighted by participants, referring to sociability conditions and self-perception developed by workers, are associated with higher levels of psychological capital and, consequently, a healthier and more effective work environment.

The findings of these studies not only corroborate previous research on the topic but also highlight that relationships between the variables occur both directly and indirectly through constructs such as feedback, engagement, adaptability, happiness, and leadership. This interconnection underscores the importance of PsyCap in the organizational context and its implications for developing more positive and effective work environments. Moreover, these findings provide theoretical and practical support for strengthening interpersonal bonds and developing institutional policies that promote mental health, well-being, and quality of life in the academic environment.

The study by Pires Junior, Venelli-Costa, Sanematsu, and Vieira (2021) demonstrated that the variables Perceived Organizational Support and Psychological Capital have a positive impact on reducing mental illnesses. In this context, Perceived Organizational Support showed a greater impact than Psychological Capital. These results highlight the relevance of these variables in promoting mental health in the workplace, with significant implications for organizational practices and guidelines.

Similarly, Vujčić et al. (2021), when evaluating the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the mental health of the Serbian working population during the state of emergency and lockdown, assessed levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Among the 1,057 participants, 28.9%, 36.9%, and 38.1% reported moderate to severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress, respectively. Factors such as discomfort with COVID-19 news, feelings of helplessness, perceived likelihood of imminent death, and presence of COVID-19 symptoms were associated with higher levels of these conditions. Older age was associated with lower anxiety and stress, and higher socioeconomic status was linked to lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Overall, the results highlighted that DASS-21 parameters were associated with increased psychological distress, while organizational support had a reducing effect on distress, mediated by positive psychological capital. Thus, this study contributed theoretically by expanding the scope of the DASS-21 scale, adding valuable insights to the literature in organizational psychology and human resource management.

Specifically, the factor loadings (λ), which were significant, confirm the adequacy of the proposed theoretical model and the consistency of the relationships between the analyzed constructs. The latent variables showed good measurement validity and structural coherence,

allowing interpretation of predictive relationships. From a theoretical standpoint, the findings empirically show that perceived organizational support (POS) is positively associated with positive psychological capital at work (PPCW), while the latter is negatively related to common emotional disorders (DASS-21). This configuration indicates an indirect protective effect of the organizational context on workers' mental health, mediated by positive psychological resources.

This empirical dynamic can be understood in light of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) theory, which posits that resources such as hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism function as psychological mechanisms that strengthen adaptation to work demands and reduce emotional vulnerabilities. Thus, when workers perceive institutional support, recognition, and appreciation from the organization, these internal resources are strengthened, reducing the likelihood of psychological distress.

Therefore, the findings reinforce the hypothesis that organizational conditions influence mental health not only directly but also through mediating psychological processes that function as mechanisms of protection or vulnerability in the workplace.

The analysis of variance revealed significant differences between periods before, during, and after COVID-19 social isolation, showing that the pandemic context produced important changes in the variables studied. Specifically: PPCW showed higher scores at the end of the pandemic; organizational support was higher during social isolation; and common emotional disorders (DASS-21) also reached higher levels during isolation.

These results can be interpreted considering the adaptive nature of organizations and workers in the face of collective crises. During the most critical period of the pandemic, many organizations intensified communication strategies, institutional support, and work flexibility, which may explain the increase in perceived organizational support.

However, despite this increase, the context of uncertainty, social isolation, health risks, and abrupt changes in work routines contributed to higher levels of emotional distress, a phenomenon widely documented in international occupational health literature. A notable finding was the increase in psychological capital at the end of the pandemic, which may indicate a process of adaptive reconstruction or post-crisis growth.

Regarding the influence of work format, comparisons revealed: higher PPCW among on-site workers; higher DASS-21 scores among remote workers; and no significant differences in organizational support. These findings suggest that remote work, despite operational advantages, may increase psychosocial vulnerability factors such as social isolation, blurred work-life boundaries, cognitive overload, and reduced social interaction and informal support.

Consequently, these conditions may lead to higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Conversely, on-site workers may benefit from greater interaction, cooperation, and organizational feedback, strengthening positive psychological resources.

Regarding the combined effects, higher emotional disorder levels were observed particularly in situations combining low psychological capital and low organizational support, especially during the pandemic. This confirms the importance of multivariate models, as occupational distress results from the interaction between organizational conditions, individual psychological resources, and socio-labor context.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research explored not only the empirical quality of psychological measures but also the relationships between variables across three moments: before, during, and after COVID-19 social isolation.

The findings show how this phenomenon influenced organizational behavior, shaping workers' perceptions of organizational support and the development of emotional investment through psychological capital, reducing mild emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression, and stress.

The theoretical models proved viable and highlighted the importance of organizational support in fostering beneficial emotional and psychological development. Organizations play a crucial role in promoting healthy productivity and worker well-being.

It is essential for organizations to invest in human and social aspects, fostering a broader sense of purpose beyond profit, creating emotionally sustainable workplaces.

From a practical perspective, implications include: strengthening organizational support policies, developing PsyCap training programs, implementing mental health strategies, and addressing psychosocial impacts of remote work.

Limitations include the cross-sectional design, use of self-report measures, pandemic context, and sample characteristics, which may limit generalizability.

Future research should include longitudinal designs, expanded models, comparative studies, mixed methods, and broader samples.

Overall, the study contributes to understanding occupational mental health, emphasizing that worker well-being depends not only on individual factors but also on organizational relationships and psychosocial resources.

Finally, it highlights the need for a paradigm shift in organizational practices regarding worker health, emphasizing awareness of interpersonal processes and self-care, as a healthy worker contributes to a healthier society.

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