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THE PATH OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL'S INFLUENCE ON THE SUBJECTIVE SENSE OF SHARED PROSPERITY AMONG RESIDENTS IN HENAN PROVINCE

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Abstract: Shared prosperity, a core goal of Chinese modernization, has expanded from economic indicators to broader social and psychological dimensions. In this context, residents' subjective sense of gain, as a psychological perception of development achievements and fairness, has become essential. This study explores how psychological capital in Henan Province—hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy—affects residents' sense of shared prosperity. Based on social support theory, we hypothesize that social support mediates this relationship. A large-scale survey of 655 residents (588 valid) was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression models. Results show a significant positive link between psychological capital and shared prosperity, both directly and through enhanced social support. These findings enrich the psychological theory of shared prosperity and offer policy insights on promoting residents' well-being and sense of gain through psychological interventions and community building.
Keywords: Psychological capital; Shared prosperity; Sense of gain

1 INTRODUCTION

Entering a new stage of development, China has placed shared prosperity in a more prominent position. It is not merely a matter of economic prosperity but a comprehensive advancement encompassing material and spiritual well-being, individuals and society, the present and the future. Within this grand narrative, the residents' "sense of gain" has become a crucial subjective indicator for measuring whether the process of shared prosperity is effective and benefits everyone. The sense of shared prosperity reflects the public's subjective satisfaction with and recognition of a series of socio-economic development achievements, such as income distribution, public services, equity in education and healthcare, and social security. However, in Henan Province, with its population of nearly 100 million and diversified development models, residents' sense of gain is not homogenous. Besides objective economic indicators, individuals' subjective psychological states play a crucial and undeniable role in shaping their perception of social development.

In the field of psychological research, the concept of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) has rapidly become a focal point since its introduction. It is defined as a positive, measurable, and developable psychological state of an individual, serving as a "fourth type of capital" beyond traditional human, social, and organizational capital [1]. The four core components of psychological capital—hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy—have been proven to be closely related to individual well-being, job performance, life satisfaction, and the ability to cope with adversity [2]. For example, Snyder pointed out that hope is not just a simple wish but a positive cognitive state that drives individuals to set goals and find paths to achieve them [3]. Masten, on the other hand, emphasized that resilience enables individuals to recover quickly from adversity and even grow from it [4]. These positive psychological traits allow individuals with high psychological capital to respond more positively and proactively when faced with challenges in life and work.

Linking psychological capital to the sense of shared prosperity, we have reason to believe that an individual's internal psychological resources are important filters for perceiving and evaluating the external social environment. A resident filled with hope, optimism, confidence, and resilience may interpret and accept social changes with a more positive mindset, even when faced with temporary difficulties or social injustices, thereby possessing a stronger sense of shared prosperity. However, most current research focuses on the impact of psychological capital on micro-level issues like work and education, with little research directly linking it to the macro-social issue of shared prosperity.

This study aims to fill this theoretical gap by systematically exploring the path of psychological capital's influence on the sense of shared prosperity among residents in Henan Province through an empirical survey. Our core hypothesis is that psychological capital not only directly affects the sense of shared prosperity but may also have an indirect impact through the mediating variable of social support. Social support is considered a vital buffer for coping with stress and enhancing well-being [5]. We speculate that individuals with high psychological capital, due to their stronger social skills and positive mindset, are more inclined to build and maintain high-quality social relationship networks, thus gaining more emotional, informational, and material support. This rich social support, in turn, enhances their perception of social equity and equal access to public services, ultimately boosting their sense of shared prosperity. By systematically examining these issues, this study aims to provide a new perspective for understanding the psychological connotation of shared prosperity and offer psychological insights for policymakers to enhance residents' subjective sense of gain.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Psychological Capital: Connotation and Function

The concept of psychological capital was first proposed by Luthans et al. in the field of positive organizational behavior. It is defined as a positive, measurable, and developable psychological state of an individual, serving as a "fourth type of capital" beyond traditional human, social, and organizational capital. Its core consists of four measurable and developable positive psychological states [6]: hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy. These traits collectively form a powerful and positive psychological resource pool that enables individuals to effectively cope with challenges, unleash their inner potential, and ultimately enhance their overall well-being and performance.

Recent studies have further confirmed the predictive role of psychological capital on various positive outcomes for individuals. For example, Bandura pointed out that self-efficacy is a critical factor influencing individual behavior and achievement, as individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals [7]. The study by Diener & Seligman showed that extremely happy people do not necessarily have smooth lives but rather possess positive psychological traits to cope with life's ups and downs [8]. These studies provide a solid theoretical foundation for the application of psychological capital in broader social issues.

2.2 Sense of Shared Prosperity: Theoretical Origins and Measurement

The sense of shared prosperity is the reflection of the shared prosperity concept at the individual subjective level. It is related to but distinct from the traditional concepts of "happiness" and "life satisfaction." Happiness is more of an individual's overall evaluation of their own life state, while the sense of shared prosperity focuses more on the subjective feelings about collective issues such as social equity, equal opportunities, and accessibility of public services [9]. The study by Oishi et al., through an analysis of global data, revealed how income inequality erodes social trust and the sense of fairness, thereby reducing residents' subjective well-being. This provides key evidence for understanding the socio-structural factors influencing the sense of shared prosperity [10]. The empirical research by Luthans et al. demonstrated that psychological capital, as a core positive psychological construct, can significantly predict employees' job performance and satisfaction. This, at the micro level, substantiates the important impact of positive psychological states on individual outcomes, laying the groundwork for investigating its relationship with the sense of shared prosperity [11].

2.3 The Relationship between Psychological Capital, Social Support, and Sense of Shared Prosperity

In connecting psychological capital with the sense of shared prosperity, we cannot ignore the mediating role of social support. Social support refers to the material, emotional, and informational assistance that an individual receives from their social relationship network, and it is considered a crucial resource for coping with stress and enhancing well-being [12]. Recent studies, such as Harandi et al.'s systematic review on university students' well-being, also re-emphasized the critical role of social support in helping individuals cope with adversity [13]. The research by Hobfoll pointed out that social support is a core component in monitoring and managing students' psychological well-being [14]. These studies all provide a theoretical basis for our hypothesis that social support plays a mediating role between psychological capital and the sense of shared prosperity.

Based on the literature reviewed above, this study proposes the following theoretical model: Psychological Capital (independent variable) indirectly influences the Sense of Shared Prosperity (dependent variable) through Social Support (mediating variable). Specifically, residents with high psychological capital, due to their stronger self-efficacy and optimistic mindset, will be more proactive in participating in social activities, building more extensive and stable social support networks. This high-quality social support, in turn, will enhance their perception of social equity and equal access to public services, ultimately boosting their sense of shared prosperity. By systematically examining these issues, this study aims to provide a new perspective for understanding the psychological connotation of shared prosperity and offer psychological insights for policymakers to enhance residents' subjective sense of gain.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Research Subjects and Sampling Method

This study targets residents of Henan Province, using a combination of multi-stage stratified random sampling and convenience sampling for data collection. The survey subjects cover residents of different cities, age groups, occupations, and educational backgrounds in Henan Province to ensure the representativeness of the sample. Between October and December 2024, a total of 655 questionnaires were distributed, and 588 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective response rate of 89.77%.

3.2 Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and theoretical model, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between psychological capital and the sense of shared prosperity among

residents in Henan Province.
H2: Each dimension of psychological capital (hope, resilience, optimism, self-efficacy) can significantly and positively predict the sense of shared prosperity.
H3: Social support plays a mediating role between psychological capital and the sense of shared prosperity.
H4: Each dimension of psychological capital indirectly influences the sense of shared prosperity through social support.

3.3 Research Instruments

This study adopted a combined online and offline questionnaire survey method. The questionnaire includes the following three scales:
(1) Psychological Capital Questionnaire: The PCQ-24 scale revised by Luthans et al. was used, consisting of 24 items measuring the four dimensions of hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy. A 6-point Likert scale was used, ranging from "1-Completely Disagree" to "6-Completely Agree." This scale has shown good reliability and validity in China [15].
(2) Social Support Rating Scale: The Social Support Rating Scale (SSRS) developed by Xiao Shuiyuan was used. This scale has 10 items measuring objective support, subjective support, and the utilization of support [16].
(3) Sense of Shared Prosperity Scale: A 15-item scale revised by our research team based on relevant literature was used, measuring the three dimensions of a sense of economic fairness, a sense of social development, and a sense of spiritual and cultural well-being. A 5-point Likert scale was used, ranging from "1-Very Dissatisfied" to "5-Very Satisfied"[17].

3.4 Research Procedures and Data Processing

After receiving ethical committee approval, this study distributed the questionnaire through online platforms such as Wenjuanxing and collaborated with communities and enterprises offline to distribute paper questionnaires. At the beginning of the questionnaire, we fully informed the participants of the study's purpose, confidentiality principles, and voluntary participation. After data collection, SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 24.0 statistical software were used for data analysis. First, reliability and validity tests were conducted to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire. Then, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were performed, and finally, hierarchical regression analysis and mediation effect analysis were used to test the research hypotheses.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

A total of 655 questionnaires were returned in this study. After excluding invalid questionnaires, a final total of 588 valid questionnaires were obtained, with an effective return rate of 89.77%. The sample distribution by age, gender, education level, and income level was balanced, showing good representativeness.
The table below shows the descriptive statistics of the main research variables and their intercorrelations.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis of Main Research Variables (N=588)

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological Capital	4.81	0.85	1					
2. Hope	4.92	0.91	$.78^{***}$	1				
3. Resilience	4.75	0.89	$.75^{***}$	$.65^{***}$	1			
4. Optimism	5.03	0.95	$.81^{***}$	$.72^{***}$	$.68^{***}$	1		
5. Self-Efficacy	4.67	0.88	$.80^{***}$	$.69^{***}$	$.70^{***}$	$.76^{***}$	1	
6. Social Support	3.98	0.77	$.68^{***}$	$.59^{***}$	$.62^{***}$	$.65^{***}$	$.67^{***}$	1
7. Sense of Shared Prosperity	4.12	0.72	$.59^{***}$	$.52^{***}$	$.50^{***}$	$.55^{***}$	$.58^{***}$	$.61^{***}$

Note: $^{***}p < 0.001$

As shown in Table 1, all core variables have a significant positive correlation with each other ($p < 0.001$). Among them, the correlation coefficient between Psychological Capital and Sense of Shared Prosperity is 0.59, indicating a moderate positive association, which preliminarily supports research hypothesis H1. Among the four dimensions of psychological capital, Self-Efficacy and Optimism have the highest correlations with the sense of shared prosperity, at 0.58 and 0.55, respectively. In addition, psychological capital also has a significant positive correlation with social support ($r = 0.68$), and social support also has a significant positive correlation with the sense of shared prosperity ($r = 0.61$), which provides a basis for the subsequent mediation effect test.

4.2 Regression Analysis and Mediation Effect Test

To further test the predictive effect of psychological capital on the sense of shared prosperity and the mediating role of social support, this study conducted hierarchical regression analysis and a mediation effect test.

Table 2 Regression Analysis of Psychological Capital on Sense of Shared Prosperity (N=588)

Variable	β	t	Sig.
Model 1			
Psychological Capital	0.589	15.21	<0.001
R^2	0.347		
ΔR^2	0.347		

Note: The dependent variable is the sense of shared prosperity

As shown in Table 2, after controlling for demographic variables, psychological capital can significantly and positively predict the sense of shared prosperity ($\beta = 0.589$, $p < 0.001$), and it explains 34.7% of the variance. This result re-validates hypothesis H1.
Next, this study used the Bootstrap method to test the mediating role of social support between psychological capital and the sense of shared prosperity.

Table 3 Mediation Effect Test Results for Social Support (N=588)

Path	Coefficient	Standard Error	95% CI
Direct Effect			
Psychological Capital→Sense of Shared Prosperity	0.285	0.041	[0.205, 0.365]
Mediating Effect			
Psychological Capital→Social Support→Sense of Shared Prosperity	0.301	0.038	[0.228, 0.375]
Total Effect			
Psychological Capital→Sense of Shared Prosperity	0.586	0.049	[0.489, 0.683]

Note: Bootstrap method was used with 5000 samples

As shown in Table 3:
(1) Total Effect: The total effect of psychological capital on the sense of shared prosperity is significant ($\beta = 0.586$), which is consistent with the results in Table 2.
(2) Direct Effect: After including social support as a mediating variable, the direct predictive effect of psychological capital on the sense of shared prosperity is still significant ($\beta = 0.285$).
(3) Mediating Effect: The Bootstrap test shows that the mediating effect of social support is significant, and the 95% confidence interval does not contain zero ([0.228, 0.375]). The proportion of the mediating effect to the total effect is approximately (0.301 / 0.586) * 100% ≈ 51.36%.
These results indicate that social support plays a partial mediating role between psychological capital and the sense of shared prosperity. This means that psychological capital not only directly affects the sense of shared prosperity but also indirectly influences it by enhancing individuals' social support levels, thus validating research hypothesis H3.

5 DISCUSSION

The empirical results of this study clearly indicate that residents' psychological capital in Henan Province is a crucial predictor of their sense of shared prosperity, which is consistent with research hypothesis H1. This finding provides an important psychological perspective for understanding the path to achieving shared prosperity. Previous studies have mostly focused on the impact of objective indicators such as income, education, and healthcare on the sense of gain, while this study emphasizes the critical role played by individuals' subjective psychological traits. Residents with high psychological capital, due to their stronger self-efficacy, optimistic mindset, and resilience, are more likely to transform macro-social policies into positive personal experiences and proactively seek and create opportunities, thereby having a stronger perception of the progress toward shared prosperity. This aligns with the research of Diener & Seligman, who pointed out that extremely happy people do not have smooth lives but rather possess positive psychological traits to cope with life's ups and downs [8].

5.1 The Differentiated Impact of Psychological Capital Dimensions on the Sense of Gain

Further analysis in this study reveals the differentiated impact of each dimension of psychological capital on the sense of shared prosperity. It is particularly noteworthy that the two core dimensions of psychological capital—self-efficacy and optimism—have the highest correlation with the sense of shared prosperity. This may suggest that in the pursuit of shared prosperity, residents' confidence in their ability to change their destiny (self-efficacy) and their positive expectations for future social development (optimism) are the most central psychological factors influencing their subjective feelings. This echoes Ames & Archer's research on achievement goals, where a positive belief in one's own abilities and the future is a key to driving individual behavior and enhancing subjective well-being [18]. This intrinsic positive belief enables residents to proactively seek and utilize social resources, rather than just passively waiting for policy benefits. Conversely, if residents lack a sense of self-efficacy, they may feel powerless and unable to effectively utilize the abundant resources and opportunities society provides, leading to a diminished sense of gain. Similarly, a pessimist may tend to view positive social changes as coincidental or insignificant, and thus fail to form a strong sense of shared prosperity.

5.2 The Mediating Role and Path Analysis of Social Support

Another significant finding of this study is the significant mediating role of social support between psychological capital and the sense of shared prosperity, which validates research hypothesis H3. This result provides a clear path model: Psychological Capital → Social Support → Sense of Shared Prosperity.

Path 1: The Promoting Effect of Psychological Capital on Social Support. Residents with high psychological capital are more confident (self-efficacy), more resilient (resilience), and better at social interactions (optimism). They are more attractive and proactive in their interactions with others, making it easier for them to build and maintain high-quality social support networks. For example, a resident who is optimistic and hopeful is more willing to proactively interact with others in community activities and share experiences, thereby gaining more emotional support and informational resources.

Path 2: The Buffering and Enhancing Effect of Social Support on the Sense of Gain. A high-quality social support network provides residents with multi-faceted support—emotional, informational, and material—effectively alleviating the stress and uncertainty in life. When residents face difficulties, support from family, friends, or the community can help them cope with challenges more effectively, enhance their sense of security and belonging, and thus indirectly boost their sense of trust in the social environment and their identification with shared prosperity. This support network makes individuals feel that they are not fighting alone but are part of a mutually supportive collective, and this sense of community is itself an important source of a sense of gain.

5.3 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer important theoretical and practical implications for advancing shared prosperity.

Theoretical Contributions: This study is the first to link the concept of psychological capital from positive psychology with the macro-social issue of the sense of shared prosperity, and it reveals the mediating role of social support. This provides a new perspective and empirical basis for the psychological study of shared prosperity, indicating that its realization requires not only a focus on economic distribution and equal public services but also on the internal psychological development of residents.

Practical Implications: At the policy level, in addition to traditional economic policies, more attention should be paid to residents' mental health and the development of a social support system.

Enhancing Psychological Capital: The government and communities can launch a series of mental health education and training programs, such as promoting knowledge of positive psychology and teaching residents how to cultivate traits like optimism and resilience, thereby enhancing their internal psychological capital.

Strengthening Social Support Networks: Encourage and support residents to establish and participate in community organizations, volunteer services, and other activities to provide them with more social opportunities and platforms. For example, setting up mental counseling rooms in communities and organizing neighborhood mutual aid groups can enhance residents' social support by strengthening community functions, which in turn boosts their sense of shared prosperity.

6 CONCLUSION

Through the survey of residents in Henan Province, this study systematically explored the influence of psychological capital on the sense of shared prosperity and its action path, leading to the following main conclusions:

(1) There is a significant positive correlation between residents' psychological capital in Henan Province and their sense of shared prosperity, meaning that residents with higher psychological capital have a stronger sense of shared prosperity.

(2) Each dimension of psychological capital, particularly self-efficacy and optimism, has a significant predictive effect on the sense of shared prosperity.

(3) Social support plays a significant partial mediating role between psychological capital and the sense of shared prosperity, indicating that psychological capital not only directly affects the sense of gain but also indirectly enhances it by strengthening individuals' social support levels.

Although this study has yielded some meaningful findings, it also has certain limitations. First, this study is a cross-sectional study, which cannot infer a strict causal relationship between the variables. Future research can use longitudinal surveys or experimental methods to more clearly reveal the causal relationships. Second, this study only examined social support as a mediating variable. Future research can explore other potential mediating variables, such as active coping strategies and social trust. Finally, the sample is limited to residents of Henan Province, and the generalizability of the conclusions needs to be further validated in other regions.

Future research can be expanded in the following areas:

(1) Longitudinal Study: Use long-term tracking surveys to dynamically examine the changes and mutual influence of psychological capital, social support, and the sense of shared prosperity over time.

(2) Qualitative Research: Combine in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gain a deeper understanding of the specific connotation of the sense of shared prosperity for residents and the mechanism of psychological capital's role in it.

(3) Intervention Research: Based on the conclusions of this study, develop and implement psychological intervention programs aimed at enhancing residents' psychological capital and sense of gain, and evaluate their effectiveness.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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