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Psychological capital and performance: A two-level study integrating OCTAPACE culture

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Abstract

Organizations now contend that psychological resources and organizational culture are critical in delivering performance outcomes. The concept of psychological capital (PsyCap) has been gaining momentum, but there is much more that is left to be explored in terms of its influence on individual and team performance. Thus, this study attempts to find out the relationships among individual PsyCap, team PsyCap, OCTAPACE culture, and performance outcomes at the individual and team levels. Specifically, it works to find out whether individual PsyCap mediates the effect of OCTAPACE culture on employee performance. The study also examines cross-level relationships: whether team PsyCap affects individual employee performance and whether individual-level PsyCap affects team performance. The findings will thus bridge significant gaps in the literature regarding direct implications of team PsyCap on its outcomes and highlight the importance of psychological resources and organizational culture in employee performance outcomes.

Keywords: Psychological capital (PsyCap), OCTAPACE culture, employee performance, team performance

Introduction

Employee performance has become more and more important in evolving modern organizations. The progressive changes in work environments in the last few decades, in phase of globalization, technological advancement, and rising competition, have led to view the significance of employee positive outcomes for the overall objective accomplishment of organizations. Performance of both individual employees and teams has been increasingly seen by modern organizations as the determinants of effectiveness of the organization. In previous times, the prediction of employee performance was primarily based on technical skills, work experience, and task-related knowledge the employee has. However, newer perspectives have guided the understanding of the role of certain psychological resources in the performance outcomes (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007b) ^[30]. A contemporary and competitive work environment makes it necessary for organizations to look for the importance of psychological capital (PsyCap) and consider that in influencing employee performance and behavior outcomes. Psychological capital is a four-dimensional, synergic construct that comprises self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. These characteristics, in a positive state, are an index of individual well-being and more likely a source of greater performance results leading to the accomplishment of overall organizational results (Goel & Wani, 2024) ^[12].

Another aspect that is increasingly becoming popular and thought to be one more key decider of employees output at work is organizational culture. Organizational culture governs how daily activities have to be carried out, commonly attitudes and behaviors of employees from top to bottom level that affect how they interact, make decisions, and work together. Organizational culture has been a focus of attention among scholars for quite a few decades, particularly because it has been known to be one of the key determinants of the employees' attitude, behavior, and organizational outcome (Ancy Praveena & Fonceca, 2023) ^[44]. There is an increasing emphasis within research on some specific cultural factors like the OCTAPACE profile and its positive impact towards creating a conducive workplace for the employee psychological capital and performance (Lather, Puskas, Singh, & Gupta, 2010) ^[25]. The OCTAPACE profile consists of eight culture dimensions, which are openness, confrontation, trust, authenticity, proaction, autonomy, collaboration, and experimentation. It

is believed that these dimensions promote an organizational culture of growth, engagement, and effectiveness of the employees. This study looks forward to exploring how psychological capital and octapace together determine individual employee performance and team performance as a whole.

To a great extent, psychological capital has been framed in research and measurement terms at the individual level, however, more recent works have drawn attention to such constructs at the collective and organizational levels of analysis. Studies find that psychological capital influences team dynamics and collaboration as well as the overall team performance (Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey, & Oke, 2011) [52]. Consequently, it has become imperative to study how individual and collective psychological capital contribute to individual and team outcomes as well as cross-effect implications.

Psychological Capital: Luthans and Youssef (2004) [28] have set off four capitals available to organizations to become sustainable. The first of these is financial capital. They make available all the needed resources for keeping the company afloat and growing it further. Next comes human capital—the expertise, skills, and knowledge required for any activity to be carried out properly. Then there is social capital, which consists entirely of connections and relationships and helps in the development and dissemination of trust among employees. Finally, there is psychological capital that has its origin in positive organizational behavior (POB).

POB focuses on micro-individual level; thus, POB specifies the criteria for inclusion of a construct as that which has the psychological capacity/positive strength and is rooted in theory, thus also having valid measures. In addition, it must have state-like evolution, which allows it to develop with time and relate to performance. In this way, various positive resources were identified to form specific positive psychological constructs. Psychological Capital (or PsyCap) is an "individual's positive psychological state of development and it is characterized by: (1) having confidence (Self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (Optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering towards goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (Hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (Resiliency) to attain success" (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007a) [30]. Thus, Psychological Capital is all about positive strengths within individual itself.

Components of Psychological Capital (PsyCap), collectively are called HERO were originally included under the four criteria of POB, and are considered first-order constructs:

Hope is defined as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (Goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (Planning to meet goals)" (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011b; Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991) [2, 50]. Hope is thus, anticipation of a certain outcome or event, which can be both positive and negative in nature accompanied with a plan to reach it. Employees with high hope sets high goals, because such people often believe in their ability to achieve those goals. Research has affirmed the possible connection between hope and performance rated by supervisors

(Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005) [31] and the profitability of organizations (Peterson & Luthans 2003) [42]. Efficacy is defined by Bandura (1997) [4] as a person's belief in their own potential to inspire themselves, accumulate the mental resources, and devise the strategies necessary to complete a task successfully in a particular situation (Luthans, 2002; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017) [27, 51, 29]. Therefore, self-efficacy is one's faith in their own abilities in doing certain tasks. Mastery and successful experiences, vicarious learning, positive feedback, and psychological arousals are regarded as major four sources in personal self-efficacy development (Bandura, 1997; Luthans *et al.*, 2007b) [4, 30]. Research indicates that self-efficacy has a strong and positive correlation with performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998) [51]. According to Gully, Incalcaterra, Joshi, and Beaubien (2002) [13], there is a positive relationship between team efficacy and team performance.

Resilience can be defined as the ability of an individual to recover from an impactful or traumatizing event, to regain normal functioning. In a work environment, highly resilient employees are good at processing difficult situations. They are adaptable and easily navigate their path through challenges. Resilience makes people not run away from problems but to learn and get better. Thus, in the context of the work environment, Resilience is defined as: "positive psychological capacity to rebound, to 'bounce back' from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility" (Luthans, 2002a) [27]. Compared to other capacities such as efficacy, optimism and hope, resilience seems to be one state that is reactive rather than proactive (Larson & Luthans, 2006) [24]. Optimism refers to a positive outlook towards the outcome of events that is generally future oriented. Employees with high optimism approach their work with enthusiasm. Optimism is considered different from construct of hope because it envision desirable outcomes and/or while simultaneously avoiding undesirable goals and/or outcomes (Helland & Winston, 2005) [16]. According to study conducted by Hmieleski, Carr, Usa, and Carr (2007) [17], the constructs of optimism and personal well-being are positively related to one another in psychological capital. Schneider (2001) [48] identified three different types of views that promote realistic optimism in the work setting. These include forgiving the past, gratitude for what one currently has and welcoming the future.

OCTAPACE Culture: Organizational culture is distinctive to each organization, it gives identity to an organization and in this way, it influences how the organization works. Hofstede (1978) [18] defined culture as "the collective programming of human mind, obtained in the course of life, which is common to the member of one group as opposed to another". This definition puts light on culture as a shared and unconscious framework through which individual behavior is regulated in relation to the behavior of their group. According to Ouchi (1981) [39], organizational culture can best be described as the different elements of an organization that is symbols, ceremonies, myths etc. that express the predominant values and belief system of the organization. Schein (1985) [47] in his definition described that organizational culture is learned and adaptive so that employees are ready to face challenges both outside the organization and within it in a unified manner.

Various terms are used in context of organization culture that is values, beliefs, ethos, climate, environment, and atmosphere. Ethos are fundamental character, values, and spirit of a group that gives it a distinct identity. It represents the deeply ingrained beliefs and principles that shape the group's culture and behavior (Pareek, 2002) [41]. Since the 1970s, there have been different organizational culture frameworks proposed by various authors each emphasizing distinct values and dimensions; among them is the OCTAPACE culture. The OCTAPACE culture model is result of Pareek's work on organizational diagnostics and culture which was influenced by the functionalist approach, emphasizing developing values or ethos that increase employee engagement and effectiveness in the Indian context (Pareek, 1998) [40]. OCTAPACE culture framework is based on the fields of organizational development (OD) and human resource development (HRD) to foster an environment that enhances organizational effectiveness through positive cultural ethos (D'Souza & Dey, 2013) [11]. The OCTAPACE term was introduced by T. V. Rao and developed by Udai Pareek. The eight key ethos (OCTAPACE) that contribute to a healthy organizational culture are openness, confrontation, trust, authenticity, proactiveness, and experimentation play a crucial role as well. The concept of HR culture was first given by Udai Pareek and T. V. Rao and termed OCTAPAC (Khosla, 2016) [22]. Eventually, empowerment and experimentation were added to the list, which led to the acronym OCTAPACE (Pareek, 1998) [40]. The word it's self—OCTAPACE is a meaningful acronym that stands for 8 (octa) steps (pace) towards developing functional ethos (Pareek, 2002) [41].

The eight components of OCTAPACE are: 'Openness' refers to the value of an organization that allows employees with free expression, risk taking and an ability to act on and experiment with their new ideas. 'Confrontation' is an organizational value that promotes taking challenges head on instead of avoiding them. 'Trust' is one of the ethos of organizational culture that encompasses the faith of employees in each other as to how reliable they find one another with respect to information exchange, work, etc. 'Authenticity' is a value that encompasses a readiness to embrace one's own and other people's sentiments. 'Pro Activity' is an organizational ethos that entails employees' willingness to take initiative, carry out tasks, act and respond to the issues as and when they emerge. 'Autonomy' is an organizational value encompassing employees freedom to yield power independently as per role/job they have in the organization. 'Collaboration' is a value within the organization that determines how efficiently and effectively employees work together towards common goal using strategies and implementation of action plans, etc. 'Experimenting' is an organizational ethos that entails freedom to innovate and deal creatively with problems faced by the organization.

Several studies have been conducted focusing on organizational culture in relation to psychological capital; however, no research has been found that utilizes the OCTAPACE culture model to examine its relationship with psychological capital. Manchala and Sudhakar (2017) [33] found a positive correlation between organizational culture and positive psychological capital among Indian scientists, with improvement orientation being the most critical

dimension. Sairam (2019) [46] discovered that psychological capital was more prevalent in clan and adhocracy cultures, while hierarchy and marketplace cultures had lower levels. Aggarwal and Singh (2022) [11] found that psychological capital fully mediated the relationship between developmental culture and relational culture and job performance.

Employee Performance: Employees are an essential element of organizations, and they are thinking, feeling, and working part and should ideally be those who work well in a team with others, are adaptive to changes, and always have their work performed at high levels. Organizations now do not exist in stagnant environments, and modernization has made it very important for constant monitoring of employee performance, as it directly reflects upon the organizational resilience, innovation, and productivity. Alternatively known as job performance, employee performance is arguably the most widely researched variable when it comes to outcome variables within industrial management and organizational behavior (Carpini, Parker, & Griffin, 2017; López-Cabarcos, Vázquez-Rodríguez, & Quiñoá-Piñero, 2022) [9, 26]. Employee performance is, in fact, an individual-level variable in that it contributes to output in terms of tasks or activities that occur at the level of a single human actor. Performance, effectiveness, and productivity need to be separated or differentiated. Effectiveness denotes something that is assessed concerning the outputs following performance. Productivity assesses the relationship of outcomes by the costs used to secure them (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 1993) [8].

Different researchers have defined job performance on different lines. Some conceptualize it as unidimensional; others view it as multidimensional. According to Campbell (1990) [7], much of the work recognizes the inherent multidimensionality of the construct of performance, and that view is shared by multiple other works (Borman & Motowidlo 1997; Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, & Schaufeli, 2011; Murphy, 1989) [37, 23, 38]. Meanwhile, it could also be generic to a job or job-specific (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986) [6]. However, different researchers focus attention on the employee behavior towards results. Campbell (1990) [7] defined employee performance as "behaviors or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organization". Employee performance is "the aggregated value to the organization of the discrete behavioral episodes that an individual performs over a standard period of time" (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997) [37]. Research has consistently demonstrated the positive impact of psychological capital (PsyCap) on employee outcomes. Youssef and Luthans (2007) [55] found that PsyCap positively influences job satisfaction and organizational commitment. A subsequent meta-analysis by Avey *et al.* (2011b) [52] revealed a positive relationship between PsyCap and desirable employee outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. Longitudinal research by Peterson, Luthans, Avolio, and Walumbwa (2011) [43] demonstrated that changes in PsyCap predict changes in employee performance. Further studies have replicated these findings, with Kappagoda *et al.* (2014) [20] showing a positive relationship between PsyCap and job performance. Sen, Mishra, Patnaik, and Mishra (2023) [49] found positive relationships between PsyCap and employee performance and job satisfaction in an Indian context.

Research has consistently shown a positive relationship between organizational culture and employee performance. These studies highlight the significance of organizational culture in determining employee performance.

Team Performance: Teamwork has some advantages over individuality; with the larger number of team members, a wide range of new ideas can be generated by professionals having complementary skills, which leads to intense specialization in the team, which is known as a high degree of productivity (Wang, 2023) ^[53]. The notion that teams can outperform individuals is predicated on the presence of effective team dynamics. Early studies, especially those experiments at Hawthorne, have found team productivity gets influenced by social dynamics and perceived presence of others or observation (Beech, Mansikka, Harris, & Virtanen, 2024) ^[5]. Organizations in order to complete their complex tasks have become overly reliant on work teams, often self-managed, who accomplish such on their own that are needed to an organization (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, Donsbach, & Alliger, 2014) ^[36]. Team members behavior and attitude are shaped by the existing culture of their team structure, which then ultimately impact the team performance (Avey, Wernsing & Luthans, 2008; Hann, Bower, Campbell, Marshall, & Reeves, 2007) ^[3, 15]. Team performance, can be judged through the output of working collectively or given its synergistic effect on working together. Team performance is therefore an important metric within an organizational setting that tells how well a team achieves its collective objective. Team performance plays a role in organizational success and is mainly determined by type of task performance, team cohesion level, degree of adaptability, decision-making styles, and innovation (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008) ^[35].

Team performance, or team effectiveness, is defined in such terms that it becomes very difficult to generalize the concept. There is no single universal definition of team performance. This has really complicated the entire understanding and measurement of team performance as well (Kendall & Salas, 2004) ^[21]. Team effectiveness is an assessment of the anticipated result of team performance based on certain criteria (Hackman, 1987) ^[14]. Therefore, performance refers to the task-related activities and effectiveness as the evaluation of the outcomes. Research has explored the impact of positive psychological capacities on team outcomes. West, Patera, and Carsten (2009) ^[54] found that team optimism significantly related to team cohesion, cooperation, coordination, and satisfaction, while team efficacy and resilience were related to team outcomes after increased team interaction. Rego, Owens, Yam, and Bluhm (2017) ^[45] discovered that leader humility positively related to team psychological capital (PsyCap), which in turn positively related to team performance. Similarly, Dawkins, Martin, Scott, and Sanderson (2018) ^[10] found that team PsyCap positively related to team performance and satisfaction. Jiao, Zhang, Lu, Wu, and Deng (2022) ^[19] revealed that team psychological capital had a strong positive influence on individual work performance, mediated by member psychological capital and team support. These studies highlight the importance of considering team dynamics and psychological capital in understanding team outcomes and performance.

Relevance

The study under report fills the critical research gaps in the literature on the effects of psychological capital (PsyCap) on employee and team performance, as well as the contribution of organizational culture to performance outcomes. While several studies worldwide attest to the positive effects of PsyCap on employee performance, very few studied the effect of PsyCap at the team level on team performance, much less in the Indian context. In addition, majority of published research has conflated individual-level PsyCap and team outcomes, leading to methodological challenges, however this study attempts to redress the notion by differentiating between individual and team psychological capital. Another important gap in the literature deals with the effect of OCTAPACE culture on PsyCap and its impact on employee performance. Although organizational culture has generally been recognized for many years as one of the major factors affecting performance, so far, no research has particularly focused on how OCTAPACE culture, a set of eight values, relates to the development of PsyCap and how it mediates performance. This study, then, would be aimed at filling such a gap by finding out the mediation of PsyCap on the relationship between OCTAPACE culture and employee performance—an empirically unexplored relationship in earlier studies. However, even though there exists substantial evidence linking PsyCap to individual performance, team psychological capital along with its relationship to team performance is largely neglected. This study seeks to extend the literature by establishing individual and team-level PsyCap as predictors of performance in a cross-level approach that accounts for the interdependent effects of these variables at the individual and team levels.

Conclusion

Organizational behaviour theories have largely evolved and validated in western settings; however, Indian organizations especially in the service sector face several unique challenges as well as opportunities which are likely to affect the way PsyCap impacts performance. The study aims at empirical substantiation and extension of existing research with an Indian understanding of how individual as well as team PsyCap impacts performance in this specific cultural framework of OCTAPACE. In this manner, it speaks of localization of theories in psychology and organization behavior by providing relevance to Indian business while speaking to the global trend of context-specific understanding of organizations. Thus, this study not only addresses a number of research gaps but also adds to the increasingly growing body of knowledge besides empirically validating existing theories within the Indian context, especially in the high- performance service sector. It gives a better understanding of how organizational culture in general and OCTAPACE in particular shape the development of PsyCap and subsequently impacts both employee individual performance and team performance.

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