Influence of Psychological Capital on Affective Commitment among Teachers: A Reflective Analysis

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ABSTRACT

It is logical to believe that teachers with good mental health serve as added value and a moderating factor to pave the way for an enlightened and productive society. However, experiences suggest that teachers go through stress, conflict, issues of different sorts like any other employees these days. And, it results in decreased level of their affective commitment towards the organizations. Therefore, it becomes imperative to study as to how to influence teachers’ affective commitment (productivity) and explore what can contribute to their mental health (well-being).

Psychological Capital seems to have a relationship with both mental health (well-being) and affective commitment. Thus, the present theoretical paper seeks to explore the influence of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) among teachers who face day to day stressors in high magnitude. The method of this paper includes a review of the literature, personal communication, and theoretical framework. This review expounds the genesis, theory, research and practice of PsyCap. The primary aim of this paper is to expand the influence of PsyCap. The contribution of this paper is to determine the consequence of PsyCap and to propagate the impact of PsyCap on mental health and wellbeing of employees.

1. Introduction

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is the combination of four human strengths, namely hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience. Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is one of the constructs of both positive psychology and positive organizational behavior. It is defined as the HERO within and an individual’s positive psychological state of development that 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 toward 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, & Norman, 2007). Luthans and Youssef (2007) introduced this construct. It has been argued that PsyCap has greater efficacy as against human capital (experience, knowledge, and skills) and social capital (relationships, network) (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004). PsyCap motivates one to ask questions to oneself “Who are you here and now”, and “what you can become” (Pillay, Buitendach, Kanengoni, & Africa, 2013). Thus, it focuses on the strength of an individual and pushes one towards better performance and wellbeing. PsyCap promotes positive emotions, optimistic outlook towards the future, belief in one’s abilities to cope with life challenges, and an ability to bounce back from failures and difficulties (Khan, 2013).

Studies have explored that psychological capital seems to have a significant influence on employees’ affective commitment (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011; Luthans & Youssef-morgan, 2017). Also, it has been found in many studies that affective commitment is an important predictor of both personal and organizational success (Vinod, 2015).

2. A Problem Statement

According to (Mathew, 2003) it is discovered these days’ teachers show symptoms of dissatisfaction, lacking organizational commitment and creativity. They quit their jobs within a short period of their service, remain absent for longer periods, suffer from burnout, stress, and form discontented groups. Studies indicate teachers who do not enjoy well-being fail to function as effective teachers and this leads to further affecting their wellbeing (Kyriakides, Creemers, & Antoniou, 2009). And this the same with teachers who do not feel committed to the organization; they too fail to experience well-being and meaning in life (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Affective commitment and wellbeing are important because they determine mental health and positive growth (Olugbenga 2014). Similarly, happy teachers are found to be more committed and creative (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008). Research indicates that there is a strong and positive relation between Psychological capital and affective commitment and psychological well-being(Han & Chung, 2015,Diedrich, 2015). Studies have indicated that PsyCap and its sub-dimensions significantly contribute towards individuals’ well-being and affective commitment (Adil & Kamal, 2016;Khan, 2013;Rani, 2015,Li et al., 2014).The individuals with higher levels of PsyCap are better placed to experience higher levels of well-being and affective commitment than the individuals who have lower levels of PsyCap(Adil & Kamal, 2016) The problem, however, is bi-dimensional: first teachers are not experiencing affective commitment and wellbeing and second, the
organization needs committed and happy teachers because such teachers contribute significantly towards the education of the students and the functioning of the schools (George & Sabapathy, 2011).

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to rhetorically explore the influence of PsyCap and hence add to the knowledge and practical application of the phenomena. This study investigates affective commitment and affective commitment as outcome implications of PsyCap.

4. Rationale / Significance of the Study

Education, especially in Vernacular, Rural, Private Schools, is considered of utmost importance because it is crucial for the total development of socially backward communities. And for the same, affectively committed and happy teachers are required. This study adds to the literature affective commitment and wellbeing in the workplace by examining whether PsyCap can explain the effects of outcome variables. This knowledge would increase the explanatory power of positive organizational behavior theory linking it to organizational and personal benefits. This study’s contribution to practice lies in the benefits to be gained by that putting the knowledge of positive organizational behavior into practice. The outcome of the present study is expected to have an effect on human resource management to be meaningful, resourceful and relevant to teachers of rural backward communities. The present study is expected to help the policymakers to incorporate strategies to transmit positive organizational behavior in the organization’s set up. The present study is also expected to underscore the need for including the use of Capacity Building Programs for the teachers.

5. Psychological Capital

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is one of the constructs of both positive psychology and positive organizational behavior. Luthans and Youssef, (2003) introduced this construct. It has been stated that PsyCat has greater efficacy as against human capital (experience, knowledge, and skills) and social capital (relationships, network). PsyCap motivates one to ask questions of one “Who you are here and now”, and “Who you can become”. It focuses on one strength of an individual and pushes one towards better performance and wellbeing (Pillay, Buitendach, & Kanengoni, 2013). It is a multinational construct. It entails hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. We shall discuss each construct below.

6. Hope

Hope is a drive and emotion which helps to attain a realistic target. Luthans and Jensen, (2002) define hope as having two qualities such as willpower (agency) and way power (alternative pathways). Former refers to one’s potential, end in mind, to conquer destiny and the latter refers to one’s skills (planning) to find alternatives to meet success amidst challenges. Hope entails three characteristics namely goals, paths, and power. Thus, it lends resource and reality to achieve goals set by one individual. Snyder, (2002) reports that hope includes cognitive ability via which one achieves realistic and challenging goals. It is stated as a construct. Hope helps an individual to maintain a positive and healthy outlook towards one’s awareness of limitations, frailty, shortcoming, uncontrollability, and unpredictability of situations.

7. Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura (1999), self-efficacy is drawn from a social cognitive theory which refers to one’s positive belief in one’s capacity to perform one’s task in order to attain the desired outcome in given context. It includes ones’ required talents, skills, knowledge to carry out certain the task. The construct self-efficacy can be substituted by the word such as one’s confidence and conviction in order to complete the task. It has been observed that people have self-efficacy possess five important characteristics. They are as follows: They set high goals for themselves and self-select into difficult tasks. They welcome and thrive on challenge. They are highly self-motivated. They invest the necessary effort to accomplish their goals. When faced with obstacles, they persevere (Stajkovic & Fred, 1998). The one who possesses self-efficacy is driven by one’s capacity which influences motivation, cognitive resources and accepts challenges and exerts the efforts to meet the goal (Youssef & Luthans, 2007)

8. Resilience

Hayter and Dorstyn (2014) explain resilience as strength to adapt positively to the different kinds conflicts, failures, risk and adversities and rebound from negative circumstances. According to positive psychology, Resilience is understood as the process of positive adaptation and ability to return to a natural state after going through the catastrophic experience of life (Luthans & Youssef-morgan, 2017). Thus, resilience is a strength, resources and coping strategy of the individuals who manage successfully to rebound from their testing the life situation (Malik, 2013). Resilience is considered as a reactive mechanism and opens to development(Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010)

9. Optimism

Luthans and Jensen (2002) explain Optimism as seeing the future with positivity and positive attribution style which interprets events positively which foster motvatetion. Thereis two ways optimism the can be classifieded-learned optimism(Seligman, 2006) and dispositional optimism (Carver & Scheier, 2004). Learned optimism explains that distance between negative outcomes (past) and positive outcomes (future). One always makes an effort to maintain distance from past and links oneself positively to the future called an optimism. Optimist person said to have internal stablilitypersistability persistence, pervasiveness, and positive feeling. They see threats as challenges and opportunities that can lead to the roadmap success.

Hope and affective commitment. Employee’s positive nature namely hope is found to be a strength for the organization (Avey, Patera, & West, 2007). Hope is a positive emotion which drives employees to reach the goal via concentrating on the present task at hand and also having the confidence to complete it (Bauman, 2014). Of late the contribution of hope in the workplace has been studied and
found that employees having hope trait higher are more committed (Youssef, & Luthans, 2006). Bullough et al., (2018) report that the teachers having the quality of hope as their personality trait manifest a deep commitment towards their profession and organizational. They say that hope is both emotion and virtue. One can see the importance of hope when the situation of teaching is so bleak because the student doesn’t want to learn and situations are not favorable there counts as hopefulness of teaching. Luthans and Youssef (2007) in their study discovered that hope and organizational commitment has strong positive relation and organizational commitment can be explained by hope in a significant manner. The sample of the study included a vast range of employees. Peterson, Byron, Peterson, and Byron (2018) in their empirical finding suggest that managers having higher hope trait have better performance at work. Bressler, (2000) conducted an empirical study on hope and affective commitment and result of the study indicated that there is a strong correlation between both the variables. Thus, the conclusion may be made that the role of hope in job performance is significant because hope is a strong motivation so to say an intentional action, which gears towards goals and task completion.

**Efficacy and affective commitment.** In order to ensure optimum level of performance, a good organizational make sure if its employees have personal resources such as self-efficacy, in another words confidence. It has been suggested that self-efficacy of a person enhance to be committed. Dabas and Pandey (2015) report that self-efficacy is one of the predictive variables for organizational commitment because self-efficacy includes personal effort and positive attitude. Coladarci (2018) examined in his study the role of efficacy and teachers’ commitment. The result indicated that higher the efficacy higher the commitment of teachers. Also, efficacy was related to the level of teachers’ motivation and relationship satisfaction therefore to the extent teachers are satisfied with themselves, work, colleagues they feel committed with the organization because self-efficacy deals with one’s confidence and conviction about his or her talents to carry out his or her given work. Stajkovic and Fred (1998) explored the relationship between self-efficacy and work-related performance in their Meta-analysis studies and found that average correlation between self-efficacy and work performance. Similar way the studies have found that there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and affective commitment. (Larson & Luthans, 2006).

**Resilience and affective commitment.** Resilience is an individual resource and capacity which enables people to rebound from the experiences of adversities. It is related to efficacy. The claim has been made that person having trait of efficacy also has the trait of resilience. Also, it is a process rather than an outcome (Tait, 2018). Resilience has been held as a contributo organizational commitment (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Malik, 2013 ; Yadav & Kumar, 2017). Resilience trait helps in a workplace where burnout, stress, conflict, uncertainty, politics, and unethical behavior have become part of employee’s daily life. Organizational commitment and performance at workplace found to be related therefore it can be said that as resilience is related with work motivation, job satisfaction, work attitude, it is also related with organizational commitment (Larson & Luthans, 2006).

**Optimism and affective commitment.** It has been argued that optimism helps extrinsic aspect of self-efficacy (confidence) whereas hope facilitates intrinsic dimension of self-efficacy. Also while hope and efficacy are cognitive specific, optimism is both cognitive and emotional specific (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Luthans et al., (2007) conducted a study and reported their finding stating that composite factors (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) are a better predictor of organizational performance as against individual facet. Kluepner et al., (2008) propose that there are various desirable organizational related outcomes which owe to optimism. They conducted a study in order to investigate the effects of optimism on the job-related outcome and to increase the external validity of optimism in which samples were 772 undergraduate students. The result indicated that trait optimism was positively related to affective commitment. Youssef & Luthans, (2007) did two empirical studies to explore the impact of optimism along with hope and resilience on a positive outcome at the workplace (organizational commitment). Data was gathered from one thousand thirty-two employees and managers belonging to different organizations. The findings supported that the positive resources of an employee related to organizational commitment. Larson and Luthans, (2006) made a claim positing on their result of the study that optimistic employees remain with organizational for long, and exert oneself to meet the goal of the organization. Thus, one can conclude that optimistic employees committed ones.

**Evaluation.** This review consists of research studying affective commitment as the outcome of PsyCap. The salient features of studies are as follows: it was observed that PsyCap has predictive value for affective commitment. And these findings are more evident among collectivist culture. There aren’t many studies conducted in India related to this topic. Research indicated that affective commitment is influenced by the nature of organizations also besides PsyCap. A few studies which were reviewed used convenient and sample for their study.

10. **Conclusion**

Yet, in spite of the universal recognition of the importance of the teachers’ contribution, relatively little effort has been made in studying what could help teachers so that their productively (commitment towards one’s profession and efficiency) may not diminish. There is little agreement that qualification such as intelligence, formal education, pedagogical training, and interests are correlated with effective teaching/teacher. This represents the point of departure for the current research interests. The predictability of teacher behavior undoubtedly is affected by the Psychological Capital. There is accumulating evidence that prediction can be accomplished with better than chance results for specified criterion dimensions. Quality and excellence in teaching are only possible if the PsyCap of teachers is increased and assured. Thus, it can be concluded that it’s very important for teachers to equip skills and information of the positivity, hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism along with needed
information of the subject in order to impart values and knowledge for life.

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