

Psychological Capital and Positive Psychology

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CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological capital

Psychological capital (PC) is advocated for the application and study of positively oriented strengths of human resources and psychological capacities (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). It is a core construct of higher-order consisting psychological resources that are state-like and can be developed and measured. Self-efficacy is belief in the abilities of an individual to be successful at tasks that are challenging. Hope is motivational state which is positive and direct perseverance towards targeted pathways and goals for success. Resilience is a positive capacity of bouncing back from failure to acquire triumph (Luthans et al, 2007). It can improve the performance, satisfaction, and well-being of individuals. It can also be utilized as sources for combating depressive symptoms, burnout, and stress symptoms (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Luo & Hao, 2010). Furthermore, it has a mediating function on the association between performance and working environment (Luthans et al, 2008).

Positive psychology

The main aim of promoting mental health is to foster the psychological strengths, resources, and competencies of individuals and to reinforce the assets within community or preventing mental disorder and enhancing well-being as well as quality of life (Jané-Llopis et al, 2005). Positive psychology deals with the study of such resources and competencies, or that which is positive or correct about individuals- their strengths, psychological assets, and positive attributes (Seligman, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The mission of positive psychology is to understand and preserve the factors enabling societies, communities, and individuals to thrive

(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Fredrickson, 2001). The models and theories of community, individual, and organizational discrepancies are complemented with the models and theories of assets (Moore & Charvat, 2007). Novel approaches are offered by positive psychology for reinforcing psychological resilience and to promote mental health, and thus might improve efforts of health promotion in general and of mental health promotion in particular (Hershberger, 2005).

Impact of positive psychology

In a cross-sectional study performed by Liu et al (2013) it was observed that PC has negative relations with anxiety and depressive symptoms. Significant mediations between associations of depressive symptoms and PC were reported. Thereby, it was concluded that PC can reduce anxiety and depressive symptoms. Sun et al (2012) reported similar outcomes of PC by surveying 100 nurses. Strong relation between performance, job embeddedness, and self-reported PC was demonstrated. Thereby, performance and intention of job retention can be improved by PC. Peng et al (2013) affirmed that job burnout can also be reduced by PC. In a sample of 473 nurses, significant correlation was observed between job burnout and PC. This relation was mediated by organizational commitment. It suggested that PC has influence on job burnout. Roche, Haar, and Luthans (2014) reported that there is a negative association between mindfulness and dysfunctional outcomes for instance, depression and anxiety. According to Copeland et al (2014), prevalence of suicidal behavior is high among African-American veterans as a consequence of negative stressful experiences during war. These negative attitudes can be surmounted by PC through the development of positive psychology among these veterans. It can be used as an intervention for improving quality of life among African-American veterans by

developing positive emotions and feelings leading to widening arrows of actions and thoughts facilitating the building of imperative personal resources. A spiral is thereby created promoting positive emotions among these veterans.

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