



Positive Organizational Behaviour and Positive Psychology- Allegations for Individual Growth Development in Firms

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ABSTRACT

Although the value of positivity has been assumed over the years, only recently has it become a major focus area for theory building, research, and application in psychology and now organizational behavior. Positive Organizational Behaviour represents the study of how positive emotions are related to employee performance in the workplace. It explores how positive psychology applies to the work environment and how employees can learn to improve their positive psychological resource capacities. Researchers of positive organizational behaviour believe developing hope, optimism, and resilience leads to higher-performing employees. Studies show that employees, who possess hope, spend energy on meeting goals and using willpower to face challenges and teaching positive organizational behaviour will lead to better job satisfaction, work happiness, and commitment to the organization. The present study explores on the various objectives of positive organizational behaviour and gives a gist on the concept of positive psychology as well. It also reviews positive state-like psychological resource capacities (efficacy, hope, optimism, resiliency, and psychological capital).

KEYWORDS

Positive organizational behaviour, Positive psychology, efficacy, hope, optimism, resilience, psychological capital.

I. Introduction

Although the value of positivity has been assumed over the years, only recently has it become a major focus area for theory building, research, and application in psychology and now organizational behavior. Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) is defined as "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace" For a positive psychological capacity to qualify for inclusion in POB, it must be positive and must have extensive theory and research foundations and valid measures. In addition, it must be state like, which would make it open to development and manageable for performance improvement. Finally, positive states that meet the POB definitional criteria are primarily researched, measured, developed, and managed at the individual, micro level.

II. Origin and Background of Positive Organizational Behaviour

Although POB research is relatively new, its core ideas are based on ideas of earlier scholars. POB origins developed from the Positive Psychology movement, initiated in 1998 by Martin Seligman and colleagues. Positive Psychology aims to shift the focus in psychology from dysfunctional mental illness to mental health, calling for an increased focus on the building of human strength.

The levels of analysis of positive psychology have been summarized to be at the subjective level (i.e., positive subjective experience such as well being and contentment with the past, flow and happiness in the present, and hope and optimism into the future); the micro, individual level (i.e., positive traits such as the capacity for love, courage, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom); and the macro group and institutional level (i.e., positive civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship such as responsibility, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and a strong work ethic). Thus far research has shown that employees who are satisfied and find fulfillment in their work are more productive, absent less, and demonstrate greater organizational loyalty.

III. Implications for Individual Growth Development in Organizations

a) Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is the branch of psychology that uses scientific understanding and effective intervention to aid in the achievement of a satisfactory life, rather than merely treating mental illness. The "positive" branch complements, with no intention to replace or ignore, the traditional areas of psychology. By adding an important emphasis to use the scientific method to study and determine positive human development, this area of psychology fits well with the investigation of how human development can falter. This field brings attention to the possibility that focusing only on disorder could result in a partial, and limited, understanding of a person's condition.

Topics of interest to researchers in the field are: states of pleasure or flow, values, strengths, virtues, talents, as well as the ways that these can be promoted by social systems and institutions. Positive psychologists are concerned with four topics: (1) positive experiences, (2) enduring psychological traits, (3) positive relationships and (4) positive institutions

Three levels of positive psychology –

- Valued subjective experiences
- Positive individual traits
- Civic virtues

b) Self Efficacy / Confidence

Self-efficacy is the extent or strength of one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals. Psychologists have studied self-efficacy from several perspectives, noting various paths in the development of self-efficacy; the dynamics of self-efficacy, and lack thereof, in many different settings; interactions between self-efficacy and self-concept; and habits of attribution that contribute to, or detract from, self-efficacy. This can be seen as the ability to persist and a person's ability to succeed with a task. As an example, self-efficacy directly relates to how long someone will stick to a workout regimen or a diet. High and low self-efficacy determines whether or not someone will choose to take on a challenging task or "write it off" as impossible. Self efficacy has proven effectiveness in work place.

c) Optimism

Optimism is a mental attitude or world view that interprets situations and events as being best (optimized), meaning that in some way for factors that may not be fully comprehended, the present moment is in an optimum state. The concept is typically extended to include the attitude of hope for future conditions unfolding as optimal as well. A common idiom used to illustrate optimism versus pessimism is a glass with water at the halfway point, where the optimist is said to see the glass as half full, but the pessimist sees the glass as half empty. Many people have positive bias about themselves. But it is not always good to be optimistic. E.g. Optimistic managers may not make necessary actions plans and get distracted. The characteristics of pessimists are internal, stable and global attributions and of optimists are external, unstable and specific attributions.

d) Hope

Hope is an optimistic attitude of mind based on an expectation of positive outcomes related to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large. As a verb, its definitions include: "expect with confidence" and "to cherish a desire with anticipation". It creates positive impact on academic achievement, athletic accomplishment, emotional health, ability to cope with illness and other hardships. It provides determination to achieve goals. Frederickson argues that with great need comes an unusually wide range of ideas, as well as such positive emotions as happiness and joy, courage, and empowerment, drawn from four different areas of one's self: from a cognitive, psychological, social, or physical perspective.

e) Resiliency

This Phenomenon is characterized by patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity of risk. It means the capacity to bounce back from adversity. It gives a lifelong journey where competency is developed over time. Resiliency can be developed by enhancing assets that a person has through education, training and nurturing social relationships. Risk factors should be managed and adaptation process should be enhanced.

f) Psychological Capital (PSYCAP)

Positive Psychological Capital is defined as the positive and developmental state of an individual as characterized by high self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency. Drawing from positive psychology constructs and empirical research, four psychological resources were determined to best meet the POB scientific criteria: Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism and were termed by Luthans and colleagues as psychological Capital or PsyCap. In combination, the four constructs making up PsyCap were empirically determined to be a second-order, core construct that had a stronger relationship with satisfaction and performance than each of the components by itself.

g) Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the behavior of humans within an organization and the meaning that people attach to those behaviors. Culture includes the organization's vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, beliefs, and habits. It is also the pattern of such collective behaviors and

assumptions that are taught to new organizational members as a way of perceiving, and even thinking and feeling. Although a company may have its "own unique culture", in larger organizations there are sometimes conflicting cultures that co-exist owing to the characteristics of different management teams. Organizational culture may affect employees' identification with an organization.

IV. The Art of Building a Positive Organizational Behavior (Individual Level)

- Keep the employees engaged
- Make them feel important
- Cater to the professional and personal needs of the employees
- Recognize effort (Stock options, Bonus)
- Treat employees equally across divisions (Eg: Same food court for all employees including the management)
- Make the employee see the bigger picture (Entry level employee should know how he/she is making an impact)
- Build the culture by emphasizing on things such as the humble beginning of the company and its founders.

V. Need for positive psychology in workplace

Positive psychology has been implemented in business management practice, but has faced challenges. Researchers have noted that managers can introduce positive psychology to a workplace, but they might struggle with positive ways to apply it to employees. Furthermore, for employees to welcome and commit to positive psychology, its application within an organization must be transparent. Managers must also understand the implementation of positive psychology will not necessarily combat any commitment challenges that exist. However, with its implementation employees might become more optimistic and open to new concepts or management practices.

VI. Initiatives to build Positive Psychology in an Organizational Setup

- Celebrate Festivals
- Sport Tournaments
- Team Outings
- Birthdays
- Ethnic days
- Grandparents Day
- 25 Year Club
- Bring the child to work day
- Accommodative To Diverse Views
- Friendly to differently abled
- Equal Rights Women's Rights
- Employee Pride
- Job Security
- Facilitate Higher Studies
- Work Culture

VII. Conclusion

Positive Organizational behaviour and Positive psychology, when applied correctly, can provide employees with a greater opportunity to use skills and vary work duties. However, changing work conditions and roles can lead to stress among employees if they are improperly supported by management. This is particularly true for employees who must meet the expectations of organizations with unrealistic goals and targets.

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