

Does psychological capital play a role in the prediction of team altruism?

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ABSTRACT

The positive psychological resources that the hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism characteristics of psychological capital (PsyCap) holds, possibly affects altruistic behavior of teams. This quantitative investigation sheds more light on this relationship. Multiple Regression Analysis with PsyCap as independent variable predicts the four factors of team altruism: team goals, collegiality, after hours support and problem solving. Questionnaires were sent to 598 participants in different industries. Indications are that self-efficacy, hope and resilience significantly predict team altruism. This is a further indication of the important role that PsyCap plays in promoting healthy teamwork in business.

INTRODUCTION

The important role that positive organizational behavior plays in global business competitiveness, is on the increase. Businesses that develop a supportive positive organizational behavior culture, promotes reciprocal positive perceptions across cross-cultural interactions [1] and assists in communicating challenging messages in healthy ways [2]. PsyCap, which developed from the positive organizational behavior movement [3], similarly has many advantages, such as: influencing creative performance [4], advancing learning and engagement abilities [5], playing a mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement [6], improving entrepreneurial confidence [7]. PsyCap is also significantly negatively related to compassion fatigue, burnout and secondary traumatic stress [8]. Luthans et al. [3] describe PsyCap as measureable concept that is manageable and open to development - consisting of hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism:

Hope: Snyder et al. [9] relates goal orientated performance to the goal directed agency (purposive behavior), and pathways (construction of goals) in creating ways of accomplishment.

Self-efficacy: Introduced by Bandura [10], self-efficacy is the outcome expectancy and belief of the individual in accomplishing goals.

Resilience: The propensity to be able to 'bounce back' and recover from challenging circumstances [11], improving job performance and satisfaction [12].

Optimism: The characteristic tendency of the individual believe that misfortunes are beyond

control, attributed to external unstable events, and positive outcomes are attributed to internal stable attributes [13]. Optimism suppresses depressive symptoms [14] and predicts citizenship behavior [15].

PsyCap has many positive consequences that support organizational resources, performance and employee attitudes [16]. The broader thought repertoire of high PsyCap is associated with extra-role behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior, enhancing team engagement and performance. Altruism seems to play a role in teamwork, advancing organizational learning [17].

Where altruism is regarded as a selfless ethical doctrine, where the support to the benefit of others takes place, regardless of the consequences [18]. Team altruism offers an additional dimension, that team members independently and voluntary offer a non-mandatory self-sacrificial act to the benefit of the team [19]. Though the self-sacrificial side may lead to possible strain and burnout, team altruism offers promising positive outcomes in business. A measure of team altruism identifies team work, collegiality, after hours support and collaborative problem solving as measure [20].

Problem statement

More clarity is needed on the influence that PsyCap may play in team altruism.

METHOD

This exploratory quantitative design from a purposive sample of a variety of industries in South Africa, investigated the prediction of team altruism with PsyCap as independent variable. A sample of 1306 individuals were invited to voluntary and anonymously take part. Only 579 usable responses were used in the analyses. The age of the respondents varied between 18 and 64 (mean = 36.45), consisting of 55.8% males and 43.6% females (.7% missing), mainly Black Africans (68.2%), (31.8% White, Indian or Coloured), at mostly operational (29.8%) and junior management (19.1) levels. The Luthans et al. [21] and Van Wyk [20] instruments were used to respectively measure PsyCap and team altruism. Exploratory

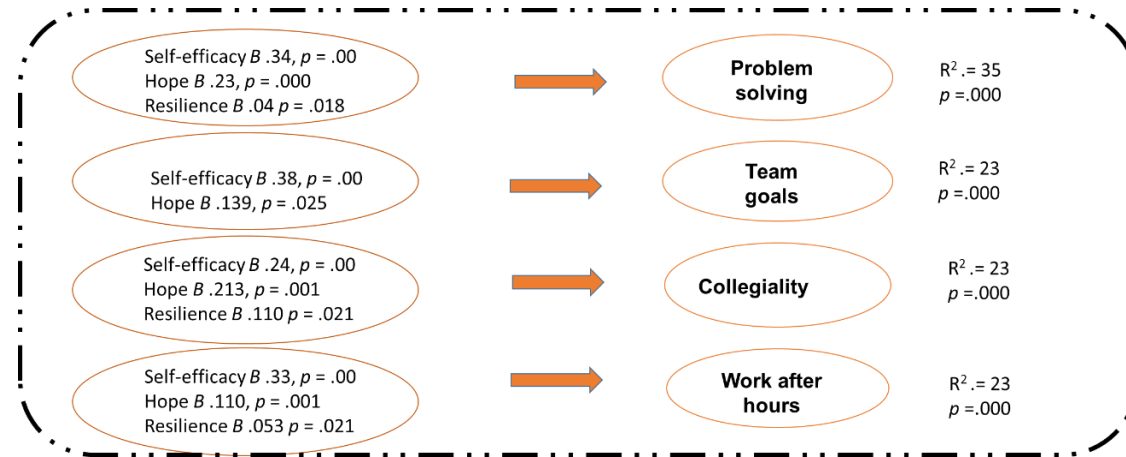
Factor Analysis indicated that the negatively worded resilience items did not load on one factor with the positively worded items, and were removed for further analyses. The reliability coefficients of

the scales are reported in brackets: PsyCap: hope (.86), efficacy (.90), resilience (.72) and optimism (.75); Team Altruism: team goals (.95), collegiality (.90), after hours (.90) and problem solving (.90).

The relationship between PsyCap and team altruism is reported in Table 1 by means of Multiple Regression Analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1: Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis with team altruism as dependent variable



DISCUSSION

The significant shared common variance between PsyCap and team altruism, is an indication that PsyCap factors improve different forms of team altruism. It is not clear what the non-significant prediction of optimism is. It could be that optimism plays a mediating role. Further research is needed to provide more clarity in this regard. A similar result is reported by Strauss et al. [22], as optimism did not contribute to the predictor variable, task adaptively.

Limitations, Future Research and Implications for Management

Though the study covers a broad spectrum of South African organizations, it is not clear if results will be duplicated in other countries. Future studies should investigate other possible antecedents and outcomes regarding both PsyCap and team altruism. Optimism may also be explored as a possible mediator between PsyCap and team altruism

This study contributes to the theory of knowledge, conceptualizing how PsyCap relates to team altruism as work variable. In the light of the positive outcomes of PsyCap on team altruism, management could improve team altruistic collaboration by improving self-efficacy, hope and resilience. Management could consider using the PsyCap questionnaire for selection purposes, or identification of needs for intervention, as it may lead to improved altruistic team behavior.

CONCLUSION

The significant positive role that PsyCap plays in facilitating team altruism, proves to be a powerful construct that business should cultivate to improve

their human capital interest as a competitive advantage.

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