

ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL IN THE MENTAL HEALTH OF WOMEN TEACHERS

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Abstract

In current changing scenario, Mental health of teachers is important issue because it adversely affects the classroom outcomes. Psychological capital is rooted in positive organizational behavior. Psychological capital comprised of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy is higher order construct and can play significant role in enhancing the mental health of women teachers. This study investigated whether psychological capital play important role in mental health of working women teachers. A sample of 301 women teachers from different primary schools, colleges, state and central universities filled up the questionnaires, measuring personal data schedule, PCQ-24 scale, and GHQ-12 questionnaire. Obtained data was analysed by using correlation analysis and hierarchical stepwise regression analysis. The result of correlational analysis indicates that hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy and overall psychological capital were found significantly positively correlated with mental health of women teachers. The results of hierarchical stepwise regression analysis also revealed that optimism and hope were found positively associated with mental health and emerged as significant predictors of mental health. Limitations and future research study were also discussed in this study.

Keywords: Psychological capital, mental health, hierarchical stepwise regression

INTRODUCTION

In current changing and turbulent environment, employees having positive mental health can play significant role in improving various work-related outcomes. Application of positive psychology in various sectors has brought the significant changes in life of individuals. Psychological capital comprised of core construct hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy, has been shown to predict various work-related outcomes more as compared to individual construct.

Psychological Capital

The movement of scientific field of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005) has touched different aspects of human life. There is increased support for the positive outcomes that can result from the focus on positive psychology (Sheldon & King, 2001; Luthans 2002a, 2002b; Luthans et al., 2007a; Peterson & Seligman, 2004), which shifts the traditional focus on what is wrong with people (i.e., neuroses, deviant behavior, etc.) to what is right with people (positive flourishing, virtues, optimism, hope, etc.) (Roberts, 2006; Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Psychological capital represents 'positive appraisal of circumstances and probability for success based on motivated effort and perseverance (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007).

Operationally psychological capital can be defined as: "An individual's positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: Having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; Making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; Persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success." (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Psychological capital offers a dynamic resource potential that can grow and be sustainable over time. Psychological capital is proposed as higher order construct. Psychological capital uses the inclusion criteria of being 'state-like' which lead to differentiate it from another construct. The 'state-like' means relatively malleable, open to development. Prior researches also support that self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resiliency are developable (Bandura, 1997, Snyder, 2000, Carver & Scheier, 2005; Wagnild & Young, 1993).

Mental Health

Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO, 2001). Therefore, mental health refers to more than just 'the absence of disease', but includes 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being' (WHO, 2001). Amir, Gatab and Shayan (2011) considers mental health as a condition of the psychological maturity that is simply the maximum effectiveness and satisfaction of personal productivity and social interactions that involve the feelings and the positive feedback towards yourself and the others. Mental Health, which has a critical role in having sustainable development, is one of the most vital human needs. The concept of mental health includes an inner feeling of comfort, self-efficiency, self-dependence, competitiveness, inter-generation reliance, and self-development of potential thinking abilities. These negative mental health correlates have been associated with increased absenteeism, poor job performance and poor health outcomes among educators (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Katz, Greenberg, Jennings, & Klein, 2016; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Steinhardt, Smith Jaggars, Faulk, & Gloria, 2011).

Recent studies show that mental health is more than the absence of undesirable states such as anxiety, but also includes the presence of wellbeing (Keyes, 2002; Westerhof & Keyes, 2009). Mental health is a complete state in which there is both the absence of mental illness and the presence of flourishing; thus, efforts are required to both prevent illness and promote optimal well-being. Curing illness alone will not guarantee a mentally healthy population (Keyes, 2007a; 2007b).

Psychological Capital and Mental Health

Krasikova, Lester and Harms (2015) examined the effects of work-related psychological capital on health outcomes in soldiers. Meanwhile in educational organization, the findings are no different than what has been reported within business organization. In the study that is conducted with teachers, it was found that teachers who have higher level of PsyCap shows lower rating of anxiety, depression and stress (Rodrigues, Carochinho, & Rendeiro, 2017) and PsyCap might be protective against depressive symptoms (Shen, Yang, Wang, Liu, Wang, & Wang, 2014). High Psychological capital would eventually lead to wellbeing (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010).

Previous studies have demonstrated that PsyCap is distinctively related to indicators that reflect psychological health such as self-esteem, emotional balance, and mental conflicts (K. Zhang, Zhang, & Dong, 2010). Optimism and hope have significantly positive influence on personal health, adaptive and adjustive abilities, stress reduction, behavior planning, employment, and so forth (Ke, Sun, & Li, 2009). Continuing adversity has proved to be associated with decreased resilience, in turn linked to mental health problem (Siriwardhana & Stewart, 2013). There is a consistent finding in many countries that resilience can be a useful tool to identify and prevent mental disorders and to develop effective interventions among high-risk populations (Siriwardhana & Stewart, 2013). Individual with resilience is more likely to take initiative to seek social support or be confident to solve negative events, thus will be beneficial to the development of mental health (Zhou, Lv, & Xu, 2013). The mental processes associated with hope contribute to the individual's overall health, result in positive emotions, influence behavior related to primary and secondary prevention, and buffer negative effects in the occurrence of stressors (Snyder & Feldman, 2000; Stajkovic, 2006; Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2006). Sing, Shukla, and Sing (2010) found that perceived self-efficacy emerged as an important predictor of mental health among elderly males and females i.e. elderly who perceive themselves self-efficacious to have control over their environment reported better mental health and vice versa. Self-efficacy influences the way individuals feel, think, self-motivate and behave. Optimism also influences health through the promotion of health protecting behaviors and the avoidance of health-defeating behaviors, which minimizes risks to wellness (Carver & Scheier, 2014; Carver et al., 2010; Scheier et al., 2001).

Past studies have linked psychological capital with various range of variable like job commitment and satisfaction, performance in occupational and social status, anxiety, perceived stress, ability to cope with the pressure and problems, happiness and well-being as well as seeking behavior (Golparvar, 2013; Luthans et al., 2005; Luthans, 2002; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2006). Existing research has demonstrated a strong relationship between PsyCap and multiple employee outcomes, such as manager rated performance and job satisfaction (Luthans et al., 2007a), trust (Norman, Avolio, & Luthans, 2010), work engagement (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008a), commitment (Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008b) and absenteeism (Avey, Patera, & West, 2006).

Poor mental health can cause major damage to one's overall health as well as overall lifestyles therefore it is an area that should not be ignored. The paucity of research on mental health limits our understanding of the determinants of mental health across populations and also limits our capacity to monitor the full impact of policies and practices

which seek to promote mental health. Psychological capital is a new and emerging field and maximum researches related to this have been conducted by Luthans and his colleagues in the US and China on more or less the same types of samples. Though it has been established that PsyCap leads to positive work outcomes but in literature it has been also found that very little research has been conducted to examine its role in mental health especially with the sample of women teachers. There is a need for research especially in India to generalize its importance in the workplace in terms of predictor for mental health of women teachers.

A hypothetical model to explaining the relationship between psychological capital and mental health has been mentioned in figure-1



Figure-1 Conceptual Framework of the Study Variables

In view of the stated importance of psychological capital and mental health, present study was planned with the following objective and hypothesis:

Objective

To examine the role of psychological capital (dimensions and overall) in mental health of women teachers.

Hypothesis

Hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy and overall psychological capital would be positively related with mental health of women teachers.

METHOD

Sample and Design

For the present study cross-sectional correlational research design has been used. The sample comprises of 301 women teachers and these women teachers were selected through convenience (incidental) sampling method for collecting data from different primary schools to colleges, state and central universities. Questionnaires were personally distributed to respondents. The summary of the demographic statistics of the samples suggest that this study has been done on 301 women teachers. They were all having age range from 25 to 60 years (mean=37.24 Years for total sample).166 (55.10 %) participants were from nuclear family and 135 (44.90%) participants were from joint family. They were all having education of minimum 10 years to maximum 30 years (mean= 20.11). All 301 women were married. They were all having work experience with minimum 1 year to 38 years, having mean value of 9.58. Most of them had on an average five to six members (mean=5.40) in their family who were dependent on them. In case of their self-reported religious belief 81 (26.90 %) women teachers reported on strong religious belief, 187 (61,80%) reported on average religious belief and only 34 (11.30%) women teachers reported on poor belief. Most participants visited to Doctor 0 to 84 times in last year (mean=4.32) and self-reported present physical health status of the participants depicts that most of the participants reported their present physical status as Excellent (29, 9.6%), Good (161, 53.50 %) and only 95 participants (31.6%) rated their present physical health as fair and also remaining 16 women teachers (5.3%) rated their physical health poor. The participants were convinced to participate and they were not paid for participation in this study.

Tools

Personal data schedule along with following scale were used to assess the psychological capital and mental health.

Psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio,2007)

This scale is developed by Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007). The scale consists of 24 items. In the present study 24 items will be used to assess hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy. Each dimension of positive

psychological capital consists of six items. Internal reliability of the subscales is .86 for self-efficacy, .85 for hope, .72 for resilience, .73 for optimism and for overall PCQ it is 0.91. Higher score indicates higher this construct.

General health questionnaire-12 version (Goldberg, 1972)

This scale was developed by Goldberg, (1972) to measure the health status of individual. It is widely used as a unidimensional instrument measuring psychological health (mental health) (Gao et al., 2004). It consists of 12 items about health and welfare issues over recent weeks. The assessment was made using a four-point Likert scale from 4 to 1. It is worth mentioning that the GHQ is extensively used by researchers and is reliable and well-validated (Goldberg et al., 1997). Split- half reliability of this scale was found to be 0.83. This scale was developed to screen out the psychiatric patient from general population. In present study this questionnaire was used to assess the level of general health of teachers. High score on this scale shows good level of mental health.

Data Analysis

After collecting response sheets of all participants, scoring for all the tools was done according to their manual and scoring keys. The obtained raw scores on different scales were entered in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 in the computer. The data was composed to an SPSS file in order to be analyzed. On the basis of objective data was analyzed in terms of descriptive analysis, correlational analysis (Pearson’s coefficient), and hierarchical stepwise regression analysis to drive the relationship between these variables. The correlational analysis was done to determine the relationship between psychological capital and mental health.

Hierarchical stepwise regression analyses were performed to test relative importance of dimensions of psychological capital which can predict the mental health of female teachers.

RESULTS

The results of correlational analysis of psychological capital with mental health are presented in the following table:

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients of Psychological Capital (Dimensions and Overall) and Mental Health

Psychological Capital (Dimensions and Overall)	Mental health
Hope	.296**
Optimism	.400**
Resilience	.157**
Self-efficacy	.185**
Psychological Capital	.374**

**p<.01

Hope (dimension of psychological capital) was found significantly positively correlated with mental health ($r=.296, p<.01$). Optimism (dimension of psychological capital) was found significantly positively correlated with mental health ($r=.400, p<.01$). Resilience (dimension of psychological capital) was found significantly positively correlated with mental health ($r=.157, p<.01$). Self-efficacy (dimension of psychological capital) was found significantly positively correlated with mental health ($r=.185, p<.01$). Overall psychological capital was found significantly positively correlated with mental health ($r=.374, p<.01$).

Table 2: Summary of Hierarchical Stepwise Regression Analysis for dimensions of Psychological Capital as Predictor Variable and Mental Health as a Criterion Variable and Demographic Variables as Control Variables

Model	Variables	Mental Health	
		Step 1	Step 2
Simultaneous regression (Step 1)	Demographic Variables (Control Variables)	Beta (β)	Beta (β)
	Age	.183	.126
	Working Tenure	-.077	-.043
	Education	-.057	-.017

	Spouse employment status	-.039	-.002	
	Family Type of Participants	.087	.110	
	No of Family Members	-.044	.012	
	Visit to Doctor	.024	.024	
	Health Status	-.165**	-.122*	
	Religious Beliefs	.063	.019	
Dimensions of psychological capital (hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy) as predictor variables				
Stepwise Regression (Step 2)	Optimism		.380***	
	Hope		.148**	
R		.232	.436	.455
R ²		.054	.190	.207
R ² change		.054	.136	.017
F change		1.839	48.658***	6.259**
F ^a		1.839	6.792***	6.855***

a- Step 1 degree of freedom= 9, 291; Step 2 degree of freedom = 11, 289

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Note- Standardized Beta (β) is reported in table 2

It is clearly visible from the results presented in the table 2 that optimism and hope (dimensions of psychological capital) emerged as significant predictors of mental health of female teachers after controlling the influence of the demographic variables. Table value reveals that optimism was significantly positively associated with mental health ($\beta=.380, p<.001$) of the female teachers and it explains 13.6 % of the total variance in explaining mental health. The hope was significantly positively associated with mental health ($\beta=.148, p<.01$) of the female teachers and it explains 1.7 % of the total variance in explaining mental health.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the present study was proposed to examine the role of psychological capital in mental health of female teachers. Regarding this objective and hypothesis was formulated. Hypothesis stated that hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy and overall psychological capital would be positively correlated with mental health. Results obtained from correlational analysis indicated that hope was found significantly positively correlated with mental health. Results of hierarchical stepwise regression analysis indicated that hope was emerged as a significant predictor for mental health and found significantly positively associated mental health). This finding is consistent with the previous studies conducted by Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1997; Kwon, 2000). Evidence suggests that hopeful thinking in young people tends to be associated with higher perceived competence, life satisfaction, more positive self-esteem (Bernardo, 2015), and better mental health and emotional well-being, (Yeung, Ho, & Mak, 2015), Marques, & Lopez, (2011), Marques (2016), Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2006), Snyder (2002). Results obtained from correlational analysis revealed that optimism was found significantly positively correlated with mental health. Results of hierarchical stepwise regression analysis indicated that optimism was emerged as a significant predictor for mental health and found significantly positively associated mental health). This result is consistent with the findings of previous studies conducted by Maryam Jalali Ghalibaf, (2017). Scheier MF, & Carver CS. (1985) Achat, Kawachi, Spiro, DeMolles, & Sparrow (2000). Results obtained from correlational analysis also indicated that resilience was found significantly positively correlated with mental health. This result is consistent with previous studies conducted by (Todd & Rottenberg, 2010), (Grotberg, 2003, p. 1), and Kajbafnezhad & Keshi (2015). Resilience is an important defense mechanism and can help in the prevention of psychological disorders and the enhancement of mental health (Davydov, Ritchie, & Chaudi, 2010). Results of hierarchical stepwise regression analysis indicated that resilience was not emerged as a significant predictor for mental health.

Results obtained from correlational analysis indicated that self-efficacy was found significantly positively correlated with mental health. This result is consistent with the previous studies conducted by Endler, Speer, Johnson, and Fleet (2001) and Lenz, Elizabeth, Shortridge, Baggett and Lillie (2002) as well as Sing, Shukla and Singh (2010). Results of

hierarchical stepwise regression analysis indicated that self-efficacy was not emerged as a significant predictor for mental health. Results obtained from correlational analysis indicated that psychological capital was found significantly positively correlated with mental health. Results of hierarchical stepwise regression analysis indicated that psychological capital (overall) was emerged as a significant predictor for mental health and found significantly positively associated mental health. This result is also consistent with the previous studies conducted by Avey et al. (2010), Luthans et al. (2013), Krasikova et al. (2015). PsyCap can promote mental health through many potential means. PsyCap has been found to be associated with several behavioral, dispositional, and occupational outcomes such a psychological well-being and happiness (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010; Culbertson, Fullagar, & Mills, 2010) which in turn enhance and promote the mental health. Obtained results are accordance with the hypothesis of the study.

Therefore, hypothesis of the study is partially accepted in this study.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The present research contributed significantly to the existing body of knowledge on psychological capital and mental health of women teachers. This study is not free from shortcomings. The present study has also some shortcomings. Sample size is very low. Because sample were taken from school, colleges and universities. It might be another imperfection of the study. In this study only working women teachers have been taken but working women from different areas of organizations should also include in future study. In addition, this study focused only on cross-sectional data; thus, a longitudinal study and experiments may be used in future research. Besides, the current study was purely quantitative; therefore, a qualitative survey or a mixed methods design may be utilized in future study.

Future study should take account all the shortcomings.

Conclusion

Working women teachers have multiple responsibilities at workplace and home as well. It creates a lot of pressure and affects their mental health. Optimism and hope are important constructs of psychological capital and emerged as significant predictors of mental health and they play important role in enhancing the mental health of working women teachers.

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